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INDIAN FIGHTS
ENTERTAINMENT



REV. CHAS. SWYNNERTON, F.S.A.

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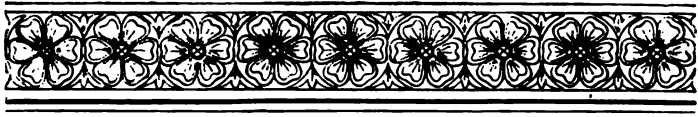
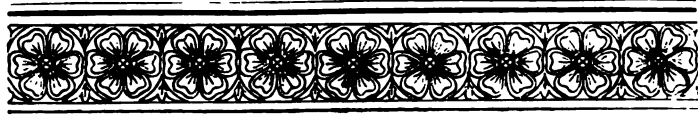
THE GIFT OF

GEORGE W. WALES,

OF BOSTON.

—
28 March, 1893.

INDIAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENT.



INDIAN NIGHTS'

ENTERTAINMENT;

OR,

Folk-Tales from the Upper Indus.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS BY
NATIVE HANDS.

BY THE

REV. CHARLES SWYNNERTON, F.S.A.,

Author of 'The Adventures of Rājā Rasālu,' etc.



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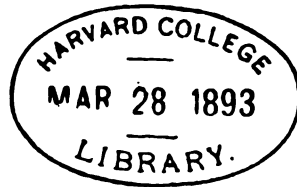
LONDON :

ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1892.

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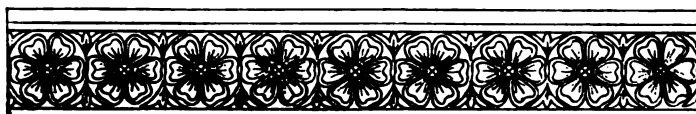
TO
HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY
QUEEN VICTORIA,
EMPRESS OF INDIA,

THIS VOLUME OF INDIAN STORIES

IS

(BY HER MAJESTY'S KIND PERMISSION)

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.



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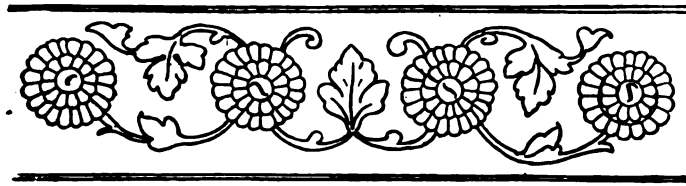
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THE GIFT OF

GEORGE W. WALES,

OF BOSTON.

—
28 March, 1893.



INTRODUCTION.

IN publishing the following stories, it is not needful to write much by way of introduction. As translations from the Panjâbi of the Upper Indus, they are as literal as idiom and freedom of expression would permit. Their collection and compilation were the work of years, bringing solace in trouble and respite from the weariness of the long glowing days of summer in that hottest of all hot places, the Peshawur Valley. As folk-tales they claim of course the highest possible antiquity, being older than the Jâtakas, older than the Mâhabhârata, older than history itself. From age to age, and from generation to generation, they have been faithfully handed down by people rude and unlearned, who have preserved them through all the vicissitudes of devastating wars, changes of rule and faith, and centuries of oppression. They are essentially the tales of the people. They are truly representative of the quaint legends and stories which form the delight of the village hûjra or guest-house on winter-nights, when icy winds are blowing over mountain and plain; when the young men of the village community gather round the blazing logs to be charmed by the voice of some wandering minstrel, to listen agape to his incredible descriptions of the miseries and the joys of hapless love, or to fantastic tales of giants and fairies; or when the weary wayfarer, if not too spent to sit up, alternates the recital of fictitious wonders by news from the outer world, or commands the attention of auditors as simple as himself, by circumstantial accounts of disastrous chances of his own by flood and fell. It was at the little village of Ghâzi, on

or elsewhere. In Europe, however, it certainly existed as a household tale in the fifteenth century, and here in the nineteenth it is found a fossil on the Upper Indus. It is not often that in folk-tales a collector discovers a resemblance so exactly marked, though it will be observed that several others in this book, notably that of Fazal Nûr and the Demon, present almost as striking an apparent identity with tales current in the West; and the conclusion which seems forced upon the mind from the comparison is not so much that the examples adduced owe their similarity to accidental coincidences in thought or inspiration among peoples living far apart, like those undesigned coincidences which are also to be observed in the works of great writers and even composers, but rather that they can trace their original source to some common tribe or family of men, whether in Central Asia or elsewhere, whose descendants, extending themselves east and west over the world, carried their household words along with them. To those who have made this fascinating branch of learning their special study the theory of genetic relationship is the one which appears to commend itself, so that what is historically true of language in general is likewise true of those simple tales in which are preserved the primitive deposits of the human imagination.

The subject of the scientific value of this collection of tales I would leave to others more learned than myself. A careful classification has been prefixed, and an index has been added, which may prove useful to the student. I have intentionally thrown my examples together almost haphazard, for my object is to amuse rather than to instruct. For men and women doomed from week to week to live laborious days, for busy merchant and leisureless professional man, for readers of ease and culture whether in the East or in the West, for old folks sitting snug and warm in the chimney-corner, and above all for the young, for boys and girls freed from the term's weary round, this volume of stories is published. And if in ever so slight a degree they tend to lighten the burden of life, which seems to grow heavier as the years roll on, if for five minutes now and then they

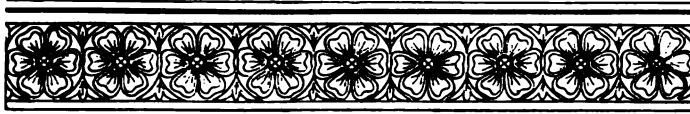
serve to mask a sorrow or force a smile, reward so great will far exceed my desert.

One word about the illustrations. They are the work of purely native draughtsmen. They are quite in the Indian manner, which was the object aimed at. In their way they are learned, since every caste-costume, every style in turban or dress, every interior, every scene of whatever kind, is technically correct, representing with careful fidelity a condition of things which has remained unchanged for thousands of years. Their historical accuracy of domestic and personal detail no European artist could possibly have depicted, while at the same time they breathe the very spirit of the tales which they are intended to interpret. And yet, though truly characteristic of their own indigenous origin, they will not fail in their naïve simplicity and directness of treatment to remind the student of much in the bygone history of Western art, as, for instance, out of many examples, the hand of Marcus Gheeraedts as seen in his quaint illustrations of *Æsop's Fables*.

C. S.

The Studio.
Port St. Mary.
July, 1892.





CLASSIFICATION.

THE partial attempt at a classification of the Folktales narrated in this volume is mainly based on Mr. Baring Gould's scheme of 'Story Radicals,' as recommended by Mr. G. Laurence Gomme, the President (1892) of the Folklore Society. It cannot be said to be exhaustive. There is not a single group which would not bear further sub-division. Some of the tales range themselves only approximately under types prevalent in the West. Others, again, present entirely new types complete in themselves. On the other hand, various types already classified are found welded together in the same story, furnishing an apt illustration of the principle advocated by Major R. C. Temple, of the Indian Staff Corps, that in the incidents, and not in the thread of a story, is to be found the true folklore tradition.

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INDIAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENT.

I.

THE SAGACIOUS LUMBARDĀR.



LARGE earthen chatty, or jar, half filled with corn, was once standing in the courtyard of a farmhouse, when a horned sheep coming by thrust his head into it and began to enjoy himself. When he had satisfied his hunger, however, he found himself unable, owing to the size of the neck of the chatty, to draw forth his head again, so that he was thus caught in a trap. The farmer and his servants perceiving this were sadly perplexed. 'What's to be done now?' said they. One of them proposed that the lumbardār, or village headman, whose wisdom was in everyone's mouth, should be requested to help them in their difficulty, which was no sooner said than done. The lumbardār was delighted. He at once mounted his camel, and in a few minutes arrived at the spot. But the archway into the yard was low, and he on the top of his camel was high, nor did it occur to him or to anyone else that the camel should be left outside. 'I cannot get in there,' said he to the farmer; 'pray knock the doorway down!' and accordingly the arch was destroyed, and the wise man entered.

Having dismounted and gazed profoundly at the imprisoned

ram, he suddenly exclaimed : ' This matter is a mere trifle. Fetch me a sword.' So the sword was brought, and taking it in his hand he cut off the animal's head at a single blow. ' There,' cried he, ' is your sheep, and here is your vessel of corn. Take them away.'

By this time the whole village had assembled, and everyone began to murmur his praises. But a farm-servant, who was reputed cunning, observed : ' But the sheep's head is still in the jar ! Now what are we to do ?'



' True,' answered the lumbardār. ' To you this affair seems difficult ; but to me the one thing is just as easy as the other.'

With this he raised a great stone and smashed the vessel into a thousand pieces, while the people clapped hands with satisfaction. No one was more astonished than the farmer. It is true his gateway was ruined, his grain spilt, his jar broken, and his stock-ram killed. These things, however, gave him no concern. He had been rescued from a serious difficulty, and so the fame of that lumbardār became the envy of all the surrounding villages.



II.

THE BANEYRWÁL AND THE THIEF.*



ONCE upon a time a little Baneyrwál, holding his two fingers to his mouth, happened to look into a tub, and there perceived his own image reflected in the water. 'Mother, mother,' cried he, 'there is a child in this tub begging for bread.'

'Listen to that now,' said the mother to her husband. 'Look into the tub, man, and see if there is anyone there.'

So the husband looked in and at once exclaimed: 'Wife, wife, there is no child; but I see an old villain of a thief, and when we are all asleep he will certainly jump out and murder us in our beds!'



Picking up a stone in the utmost alarm, the man hurled it into the tub, intending to strike the robber dead. Then

* A few of the short fables have appeared in a former volume.

'True,' answered the tiger; 'but he has also bidden everyone to earn his own bread.'

At last, after much argument, the tiger suffered himself to be persuaded, and made a solemn promise to remain at home in his den. Thenceforward every day an animal chosen by lot went to the den to be eaten. But when the hare's turn came, she flatly said: 'I shall not go; I shall live my life.' In vain the other animals tried to persuade or coerce her. Twelve o'clock, the tiger's usual feeding time, came and went, then came one, two, and three. At last the hare suddenly started up, and exclaiming 'Now I'm off!' she set out for the den. As she drew near she noticed the famished tiger tearing up the earth in fury, and heard him bellowing: 'Who is this ridiculous hare to keep me waiting?'

'But I have an excuse,' protested the hare.

'What excuse can you have?' demanded the tiger.

'To-day,' said the hare, 'it was not my turn to come at all. It was my brother's. I am thin, but my brother is plump and fat. My brother had started for your den, but on the way he fell in with another tiger which wanted to eat him, and, in fact, he caught him and was carrying him away, when I came up and said to him: "This country is not your country, but the country of another tiger who will punish you." To which the strange tiger answered: "You go at once, and call that tiger of yours out, and then he and I shall have a fight." So here I am, sir, sent to deliver his challenge. Come and kill the villain for us.'

Full of rage and jealousy, the tiger said to the hare: 'Lead on!' and the pair started forth to seek the rival tiger. As they went along the hare began to look alarmed and shrink back, and made as though she would have hidden herself in a thicket. 'What is the matter now?' inquired the tiger. 'What are you afraid of?'

'I am afraid,' answered she, 'because the other tiger's den lies close in front of us.'

'Where—where?' cried the tiger, peering forward with searching eyes. 'I see no den whatever.'

'It is there—see!' answered the hare; 'almost at your very feet!'

'I can see no den,' said the tiger. 'Is there no means of persuading you to come forward and show me the place?'

'Yes,' replied the hare, 'if you will please carry me under your arm.'

So the tiger lifted the cunning hare under his arm, and, guided by her directions, he unexpectedly found himself at the edge of a large deep well. 'This is the den I told you of,' whispered the hare. 'Look in and you will see the robber.'

Standing on the brink and looking down into the clear depths, the tiger saw at the bottom the reflected image of himself and the hare, and imagining that he saw his enemy in proud possession of the fat brother, he dropped the nimble hare, which easily escaped, and with a roar leaped down, where, after struggling in the water for many hours, he finally expired, and thus the forest was at last rid of the tyrant.



IV.

THE GREEDY MONKEY.

ONCE upon a time a monkey noticed some wheat which had fallen into a small hollow in a rock. Thrusting in his hand, he filled it with the grain, but the entrance was so narrow that he was unable to draw it out without relinquishing most of his prize. This, however, he was unwilling to do, greedily desiring to have it all. So the consequence was that he remained without any, and finally went hungry away.



V.

REPENTANCE.

A CERTAIN priest asked one of his parishioners: 'Which is the older, your beard or yourself?'

'I am the elder, of course,' answered the man.

'Your beard seems to have changed,' said the holy man, 'for it was black before and now it is white, yet you are still the same. When will you begin to change—when cease to do evil and learn to do well?'

VI.

THE PREACHER CONFOUNDED.

A MAHOMEDAN priest, seated in his mosque, was once holding forth to some villagers on the torments of the life



to come. When in the full flow of his eloquence, he observed one of his auditors, a poor farmer, weeping profusely.

'Ah, you sinner!' cried the preacher, interrupting his discourse, 'you are crying, are you? My words have struck home to you, have they? You begin to think of your sins, do you?'

'No, no,' answered the man; 'I was not thinking of my sins at all. I was thinking of my old he-goat, that grew sick and died a year ago. Such a loss! Never was a beard so like the beard of my old he-goat as yours.'

Hearing these words, the villagers began to laugh, and the priest took refuge in the Korân.



VII.

PRINCE AHMED AND THE FLYING HORSE.



ONCE there was a king who had a son named Ahmed. He was only a youth, and his delight was to ramble about the bazaars of the town. There he became friendly with four other boys, the sons of a goldsmith, an ironsmith, an oilman, and a carpenter respectively. He used to work and play with them, and they became his companions. They were so clever that men used to call them the children of magic. By-and-bye the vizier heard of these things, and said to the king : ' Your son has chosen companions out of the very bazaars, four boys who are leading him to destruction.' So the king sent a guard and had all the four boys arrested and thrown into prison. But the prince intervened, and said : ' Grant them a hearing ; do not condemn them without a trial.' When they were brought into the king's court, the little goldsmith said : ' Give us time to clear ourselves from the charges of the vizier. After eight days we shall all appear again, and the king shall judge us.' So they were reprieved for eight days, and at the end of the time they assembled to show their skill. The little goldsmith brought six brazen fish, which he cast into the king's tank, and they swam about, and the courtiers threw crumbs of bread to them, which they caught and devoured. The blacksmith brought two large iron fish, which swallowed up all the brazen ones. The oilman brought two artificial giants, which fought together on the plain until they were separated by Prince Ahmed. The carpenter brought a large wooden horse, furnished with a secret spring, and Prince Ahmed leaped on to its back ; and when he had touched the spring, it mounted like lightning into the air, and was out of sight in a moment.

The king, who had been pleased at first, now flew into a rage, and seizing the carpenter, he shook him, and cried : ' Villain, bring back my son !'

'O king, that I cannot do,' said the carpenter. 'Spare my life, and the prince will return to you in all safety in two months.'

The two months were granted, and all four boys were put into chains to await their death in case the prince did not return.

Meanwhile the flying horse, having carried Prince Ahmed five hundred leagues, alighted on the terrace-roof of a magnificent palace, and there the prince saw, reclining in the moonlight, a most beautiful young princess. Instantly he fell in love with her, and when she looked up and saw a handsome stranger standing by, she also fell in love with him. So the prince and she went down into the palace together and had a talk, and when he left her he mounted his flying horse and flew to the top of a large tâlli-tree beyond the bounds of the palace grounds. There he disjoined his horse and hung the pieces to the branches, and, climbing down the tree, he lodged at the house of an old woman. But every night, when darkness had set in, he used to climb the tâlli-tree, mount his wooden horse, and fly to the palace roof. At last the princess's confidential slave girl began to whisper the secret, and some one went to the king, and said: 'Some thief pays nightly visits to the palace.' So the king put on double guards, and everyone was challenged going in and coming out, but still the rumour reached the ears of the king: 'Some thief comes to your daughter's palace.'

Then the king summoned his vizier and said: 'No one but a woman is competent to unravel this mystery.' So a wise woman was consulted by the king and the vizier, who advised that the stairs of the palace, to the very roof, should be covered with slime.

The next night, when Prince Ahmed arrived on the terrace and attempted to descend, he slipped down several steps, and, suspecting a trick, he made his escape, left his horse on the top of the tâlli-tree, and made for the hut of the old woman. The next morning he sent for a washerman, and gave him his soiled clothing to clean.

Meanwhile the king proclaimed, by beat of drum, that

every inhabitant of the town should appear in the palace yard. The washerman, desirous of cutting a figure, donned the gorgeous clothing of the prince, and when the people assembled, he was at once singled out, and then it was noticed that his coat was stained with slime. So the king called for the executioner, and cried: 'String him up!' But the washerman fell on his face, and said: 'My lord, I am only a poor washerman, and this clothing is not mine at all. It belongs to another, who sent it to be cleaned. Let the officers come, and I will give him into their hands.'

So he took the officers to the old woman's hut, and there they found Prince Ahmed, and dragged him to the king, who ordered his instant death. Meanwhile, however, the princess had sent a secret message to him, saying: 'Offer the king a ransom. I will provide the sum, and save your life.' But he sent word back: 'No ransom shall I offer, but do you meet me in half an hour on the roof of the palace.'

Then the soldiers dragged off the prince to the tâlli-tree, and round his neck they put a halter, and they were just going to hang him, when he besought them, saying: 'Please let me go up to breathe the air of the world for the last time;' and having bribed them with two gold mohurs, he began to ascend the tree. Having reached the top, where he was hidden from view, he quickly put the pieces of his horse together and flew to the terrace, where, seizing the princess, he flung her into the saddle before him, and touching the spring he passed rapidly through the air in the sight of both king and people, and in a moment he arrived at his father's house.

After this the four boys were released from prison and made governors of provinces; while the prince and the princess, being married at last, lived together in the enjoyment of every pleasure.



VIII.

THE MAN AND THE BEAR.

ONE day, when the river was in flood, a certain dark object was seen floating down the stream. Thereupon a poor man, mistaking it for a log of wood, plunged into the water, and, swimming with vigorous strokes, seized it with



both his hands. When too late, he discovered that he was clasped in the shaggy embrace of a brown bear. 'Ho!' cried his friends from the shore, when they saw him drifting, 'let the log go! let the log go!'

'Just what I am trying to do,' answered the unhappy man, 'but the log won't let *me* go!'

* Logs of deodár are frequently floated down the Indus from the Himalayas. During floods many of these logs are washed away from the 'timber-yards' far up in the mountains. For every log regained the villagers receive a reward of four annas from the owner. Each log bears its owner's mark.



IX.

THE MISER AND THE GRAIN OF WHEAT.

A GREAT miser was once sitting on a precipice and dangling his feet over the edge. Hunger having become insupportable, he took out his small bag of parched grain and began to toss the food, grain by grain, into his mouth. All at once a single grain missed its destination and fell to the bottom of the ravine. 'Ah, what a loss!' cried he. 'But even a grain of wheat is of value, and only a simpleton would lose it.' Whereupon he incontinently leaped down from the rock and broke both his legs.



X.

THE BANÉYR MAN AND THE MILL.

A BANÉYRWÁL came down to the Indus, where he saw a water-mill at work. Said he to himself: 'People say that God is known by His wonderful ways. Now, here is a wonderful thing with wonderful ways, though it has neither hands nor feet. It must be God.' So he went forward and kissed the walls, but he merely cut his face with the sharp stones.



XI.

THE FARMER, HIS WIFE, AND THE OPEN DOOR.

ONCE upon a time a poor farmer and his wife, having finished their day's labour and eaten their frugal supper, were sitting by the fire, when a dispute arose between



them as to who should shut the door, which had been blown open by a gust of wind.

'Wife, shut the door!' said the man.

'Husband, shut it yourself!' said the woman.

'I will not shut it, and you shall not shut it,' said the husband; 'but let the one who speaks the first word shut it.'

This proposal pleased the wife exceedingly, and so the old couple, well satisfied, retired in silence to bed.

In the middle of the night they heard a noise, and, peering out, they perceived that a wild dog had entered the room, and that he was busy devouring their little store of food. Not a word, however, would either of these silly people utter, and the dog, having sniffed at everything, and having eaten as much as he wanted, went out of the house.

The next morning the woman took some grain to the house of a neighbour in order to have it ground into flour.

In her absence the barber entered, and said to the husband : ' How is it you are sitting here all alone ? '

The farmer answered never a word. The barber then shaved his head, but still he did not speak ; then he shaved off half his beard and half his moustache, but even then the man refrained from uttering a syllable. Then the barber covered him all over with a hideous coating of lamp-black, but the stolid farmer remained as dumb as a mute. ' The man is bewitched ! ' cried the barber, and he hastily quitted the house.

He had hardly gone when the wife returned from the mill. She, seeing her husband in such a ghastly plight, began to tremble, and exclaimed : ' Ah ! wretch, what have you been doing ? '

' You spoke the first word,' said the farmer, ' so begone, woman, and shut the door.'



XII.

THE FOUR ASSOCIATES.



ONCE upon a time a crow, a jackal, a hyena, and a camel swore a friendship, and agreed to seek their food in common. Said the camel to the crow : ' Friend, you can fly ; go forth and reconnoitre the country for us.' So the crow flew away from tree to tree until he came to a fine field of musk melons, and then he returned and reported the fact to his companions. ' You,' said he to the camel, ' can eat the leaves, but the fruit must be the share of the jackal, the

hyena and myself.'

When it was night all four visited the field and began to make a hearty supper. Suddenly the owner woke up and

rushed to the rescue. The crow, the jackal, and the hyena easily escaped, but the camel was caught and driven out with cruel blows. Overtaking his comrades, he said : ' Pretty partners you are, to leave your friend in the lurch !' Said the jackal : ' We were surprised. But cheer up ; to-night we'll stand by you, and won't allow you to be thrashed again !'

The next day the owner, as a precaution, covered his field with nets and nooses.



At midnight the four friends returned again, and began devouring as before. The crow, the jackal and the hyena soon had eaten their fill, but not so the camel, who had hardly satisfied the cravings of hunger when the jackal suddenly remarked : ' Camel, I feel a strong inclination to bark.'

' For heaven's sake don't,' said the camel ; ' you'll bring up the owner, and then while you all escape I shall be thrashed again.'

' Bark I must,' replied the jackal, who set up a dismal yell. Out from his hut ran the owner ; but it happened that while the camel, the crow, and the jackal succeeded in getting away the stupid hyena was caught in a net. ' Friends ! friends !' cried he, ' are you going to abandon me ? I shall be killed !'

'Obey my directions,' said the crow, 'and all will be right.'

'What shall I do?' asked the hyena.

'Lie down and pretend to be dead,' said the crow, 'and the owner will merely throw you out, after which you can run away.'

He had hardly spoken when the owner came to the spot, and seeing what he believed to be a dead hyena, he seized him by the hind-legs and threw him out of the field, when at once the delighted hyena sprang to his feet and trotted away. 'Ah!' said the man, 'that rascal was not dead, after all.'

When the four associates met again the camel said to the jackal: 'Your barking, friend, might have got me another beating. Never mind, all's well that ends well; to-day yours, to-morrow mine.'

Some time afterwards the camel said: 'Jackal, I'm going out for a walk. If you will get on my back I will give you a ride, and you can see the world.' The jackal agreed, and, stooping down, the camel allowed him to mount on his back. As they were going along they came to a village, whereupon all the dogs rushed out and began barking furiously at the jackal, whom they eyed on the camel's back. Then said the camel to the jackal: 'O jackal, I feel a strong inclination to roll.'

'For heaven's sake, don't!' pleaded the jackal; 'I shall be worried.'

'Roll I must,' replied the camel, and he rolled, while the village dogs fell on the jackal before he could escape, and tore him to pieces.

Then the camel returned and reported the traitor's death to his friends, who mightily approved the deed.



XIII.

THE STORY OF LULL, THE IDIOT.*



HERE once lived an idiot named Lull, who on the very day of his birth lost his father. It is an old saying that a boy-child who has no father is a king, for he can do just what he pleases. And this was doubly true of Lull, because he had so little sense that it was useless even to attempt to control him.

In the same town lived Lull's aunt, his mother's sister, who was also a widow with an only daughter. Her his mother used to visit from time to time, and on these occasions she would say, 'Sister, you have a daughter. Shall not our children marry together?' To which the sister would answer, 'What! marry my daughter to an idiot? What would happen then, I wonder? No, sister, this cannot be.' To this the poor mother would reply, 'You are my own sister. If you won't give your daughter to wife to my idiot son, who in the world will?' And then the aunt would relent, and say: 'Well, I suppose, as you are my eldest sister, I must. Come once again, and we'll see if we can settle it.'

At last it was all arranged, and, in accordance with the usual custom, Lull's mother sent to the boy's betrothed presents of clothes and trinkets. Poor Lull began to visit the house, too, and the people in the street, when they knew he was engaged, were quite civil to him, saying to each other, 'Don't you know this is Widow Heera's son-in-law?'

Now, it is considered an unworthy thing for a youth to be

* Lull means 'a fool'; Lulla is 'a little fool.'

always haunting the house of his betrothed, and frequent visits are always discouraged. But Lull, being an idiot, and having been well fed on the occasion of his first visit, had no regard for people's prejudices, and in short used to visit his aunt every day in the week.

One day he was on his way to the house as usual, when a girl, drawing water from the well, saw him, and cried: 'Oh, Lulla, come here, and help me to carry this vessel of water!' She was by no means so big as Lull, who was active and strong; but when he came up she began to smile wickedly at him and to joke him about his sweetheart. Thereupon



Lull gave her a great push, which toppled her over into the well, and as there was no one near to rescue her the poor thing was drowned.

When the lad arrived home his mother said to him, 'Oh, Lull, where have you been again to-day?'

'I have been to the same place,' answered Lull; 'and I have had plenty to eat.'

'Lull,' said his mother, 'you should not go there so often now that you are betrothed. The girls will all begin to make fun of you, and who knows what you may be doing?'

‘What fun will the girls make of me?’ replied Lull. ‘One of them did so to-day, and I caught her by the neck and threw her into the well. And she’s as dead as a stone, I can tell you;’ and Lull quite laughed at the capital joke he had played her.

‘Ah, what fatal news is this?’ cried the distressed mother. ‘Now this lad of mine will be hanged.’

Without a moment’s delay the idiot’s mother ran out, and as it was getting dark, she escaped observation and came to the well. With the greatest difficulty she managed to get out the body, which she carried to the river, and, tying a large jar full of sand to the neck of it, she threw it into the water.

On her way back she saw the dead body of a he-goat lying in the road. This she lifted on to her shoulders, and taking it to the well, she dropped it in. Then she returned to her own house.

She now began to reflect that, as her idiot boy was certain to chatter to everyone about the trick which he had played the unfortunate girl, her precautions ought to be increased. So she took a box of sweetmeats and scattered them all over the court of the house. Then she cried out to her son, who had gone to bed: ‘Get up, Lull—get up, boy! the sky has been raining sweetmeats!’ No second invitation was needed for Lull, who loved sweetmeats with all his heart. He sprang from his bed, and, rushing out just as he was, gathered up every one of them, cramming his capacious mouth again and again.

By this time, however, there was a great commotion at the house of the missing girl. Messengers were sent everywhere to look for her, but they all returned no wiser than they went. All night long the search went on, and in the morning some said: ‘The poor girl has been made away with for her trinkets and bangles, and they have hidden her body.’

Now, Lull had risen early, intending to visit the house of his cousin as usual. Going up the street, he noticed an unusual stir, and he stopped and asked: ‘What is all this noise for?’

'Oh, Lull,' said one, 'Gaffer Laiya's little girl went out to fetch some water, and now she is nowhere to be found.'

'Is that all the fuss?' answered Lull. 'I caught that girl by the neck, and threw her into the well. Haven't you looked for her there?'

Some of the bystanders, with the girl's father, hearing this, seized him, and took him along with them. 'Come along, Lull, and show us,' said they.

On the way one cried, 'When did you kill her, Lull? When did you kill her?'

'What, you stupid people?' said Lull. 'Why, of course, I killed her last night before the sky began to rain down sweetmeats.'

'What a fool this fellow is!' then became the cry. 'What is the use of our wasting time over him?' But others said: 'No, let us go and see. Perhaps there is something in it.'

When the crowd arrived at the well, the girl's father said, 'Let Lull go down and bring up my daughter.'

'All right,' cried Lull; 'give me a rope, tie it round my waist and let me down. I'll soon find her for you.'

So the people brought a stout rope, and Lull was lowered into the well, which was very wide, though not very deep—like all the wells of that country.

When Lull, who could swim like a fish, found himself in the water, he looked round him, but could perceive no signs of the dead body. Then he gave a dive down into the well, and coming across something at the bottom, he examined it, and rose once more to the surface.

'Hi!' cried he, looking up the well and addressing the distracted father, 'has your daughter two horns?'

'Bring it up! bring it up, Lull!' cried the poor man, 'and let us see it.'

Down into the water Lull dived again, and after an interval which seemed like eternity he again came to the surface. 'I say,' cried he to the father, 'hasn't your daughter four legs?'

On hearing this, some said: 'What's the use of bothering here with this silly fool?' But others cried out to Lull.

'Bring up the body, Lull, there's a fine lad! bring it up and let us see it.'

Lull dived down for the third time, and was longer out of sight than ever. At last he appeared once more, and looking up to the eager faces, he cried: 'Hi, uncle, has your daughter a long tail?'

Then many of the people got very angry. 'Why don't you bring it up, you idiot!' they cried, and they threatened to brain him with stones. The boy now hastily disappeared for the last time; but if he had been as other people, he would have felt the father's tears, as they dropped into the well,



worse even than stones. This time he remained under water a longer period still, until the people began to imagine he was drowned too. But at last he appeared again, and holding up high over the water the head of the old he-goat, he cried to the unfortunate father: 'See! isn't this your daughter?'

This caused the greatest disorder and confusion among the people, because, while some were bursting with rage, others seemed bursting with laughter, and no one knew what to say or where to look. 'Ah, what stuff this is!' said one of the serious ones; 'and what precious time we have wasted

over this wretched idiot !' Then some were for throwing in the rope, and leaving the lad to drown. But the father said, 'No! he is only a poor idiot—let him go.' And so Lull was pulled roughly up and sent about his business.

While all this was going on, Lull's poor mother—half out of her wits with fear and apprehension—was giving away bread in charity, and offering up her intercessory prayers at all the shrines in the place on behalf of her boy. And overjoyed was she when she received him once more safe and sound, because, though he was only an idiot, he was the very light of her life. Yet she did not spare him when she got hold of him again, and often she reproached and reviled him with: 'Ah, you little fool! you have lost your sweetheart, and who'll marry you now?' For her sister had lost no time in coming to her and saying, 'A pretty to-do in the town, and all about your idiot of a son! No more sweethearting at my house if you please, sister. I have had enough of it, and, in short, my daughter is promised now to somebody else.' So the match had been broken off, and poor Lull's love-making came to an end.

Some time after this Lull was loitering about the street, when a passing soldier laid hold of his arm and said, 'Here, lad, carry this vessel of butter for me, and if you are smart I'll give you three halfpence.' This quite delighted Lull, who was as strong as a horse, and taking up the vessel, with an 'All right, I'll carry it,' he swung it on to his shoulders. The vessel was a large jar of earthenware, and the butter was in a liquid state, like oil.

As Lull strode along the road, followed by the soldier, his busy brain began to build up castles in the air. 'How lucky am I!' said he to himself. 'This fellow is going to give me three ha'pence, and what shall I do with it? I know. I'll go into the market and buy a hen with it, and I'll take it home and feed it; and the hen will lay eggs, and I shall have a fine brood of chickens. And I'll sell them all for what they will fetch, and when I have sold them I'll buy a sheep. After a bit the sheep will have young ones, and when I have also sold them, I'll buy a cow. And when my cow has young ones I'll buy a milch buffalo; and when my

milch buffalo has young ones, I'll sell her and I'll buy a mare to ride on. And when I am riding my mare the people will all stare at me, and say, "Oh, Lull! Lull!" and the girls will nudge each other, and say, "Look at Lull on his beautiful mare!" And when I have a mare of my own, I shall not be long making a match with some fine girl with a pot of money; and I'll get married, and I shall have four or five nice little children. And when my children look up to me and cry, "Papa, papa!" I'll say to one, "O you little dear!" and to another, "O you little darling!" And with my hand I'll pat them on the head, one by one, just like this.' Suiting the action to the word, Lull, in total oblivion of the jar of butter, lowered his hand, and made several passes in



the air as if patting his children's heads; but as he did so, down fell the unlucky jar, which was broken into a thousand pieces, and all the precious butter ran about the street.

The soldier now ran up in a furious passion. 'Ah, you villain,' said he, 'this liquid butter was the king's! Come along, I am going to the king, and you shall be punished. Five rupees all pitched into the street!' So he seized Lull and took him along with him.

They had not gone many yards when they saw a mule coming towards them, and some distance behind him a buniah running and shouting: 'Hi! my mule is running away, my mule is running away! Will some one give him two cracks with a stick and stop him?' Hearing this, Lull lifted his staff and smote the mule so heavy a blow on the head that he fell to the ground quite lifeless. When the



buniah came up, he cried: 'Ah, you villain, you have killed my mule, and you shall go before the king!'

So the buniah, in high indignation, joined company with the soldier, and all three went on towards the king's court.

As they were walking along they came up to a little hut, or hovel of grass, by the roadside, in which lived a very old man and a very old woman. Here the three sat down to rest, and Lull, being thirsty, had a drink of water. Then the soldier and the buniah said to the old couple: 'Do you know who this is? This is Lull.' When the old woman, who was of a whimsical turn, heard that, she said:

'O Lulla, do tell us the story of how Lanka was captured, and how Dehsar, the ten-headed god, was killed.'

'Now, woman,' answered Lull, 'don't be teasing me. Don't you see what trouble I am in?'

But the old lady was not to be denied. 'Now, do tell us, Lull,' said she. 'Now hear, O soldier,' then replied Lull, 'and hear you, O buniah! This old woman wants to know how Lanka was taken, and how the ten-headed god was killed. I can show her this far better than I can tell her, and if I do not show her she will not believe me.'

Saying this, the stupid lad sprang up, and, seizing a hatchet which was lying by, he cut off the old man's head at a single blow. 'This,' cried he, 'is how the ten-headed god was killed.'

Then he caught up some dry grass, set a light to it and fired the hut, which in a moment was enveloped in flames.



Nor would the old woman have escaped being burnt to death if Lull had not dragged her out of the place. 'And now,' said he, 'this is the way that Lanka was taken.'

Then was the old woman sorry she spoke, but her rage was greater than her grief, for she swore in the most dreadful manner. 'But, you villain!' said she, 'I'll tell the king, and you shall be hanged.' And she joined the soldier and the buniah to add her accusation to theirs.

Away started the party once more ; but before coming to the king's court they passed the shop of an oil-seller. Here Lull halted and said to the soldier : ' Look, my hair is so rough and untidy that I am not fit to go before the king. Let me enter this shop and smooth down my hair with a little oil.' To this the soldier consented, and Lull entered the shop, which was kept by another old woman. All round there were shelves, and on the shelves stood large earthen



vessels quite full of oil. Said Lull to the shop-keeper : ' Mother, I have a few cowries here ; let me have a little oil for my hair.' And he gave her two or three cowries. Then the woman took an iron spoon and brought the boy a little oil from one of the vessels. Lull held out his hand for it, and she poured it into his palm ; but Lull was so silly that he let it all run out between his fingers, and it dropped on the floor. Then said he : ' I bought a few cowries' worth of oil, and even that small quantity has slipped away !' But spilt oil is a sign of good luck, and the woman thought she would cheer him up by saying : ' O boy, you are in luck to-day ; you have certainly escaped something dreadful !'

When Lull heard the woman speaking thus, he began thinking to himself, ' I have spilt these few drops of

oil, and I am in luck, and perhaps have missed some great misfortune or other. But if I spill all the oil in the shop I shall bring better luck on myself and everybody else as well.' So he lifted his heavy staff, and laying on the chatties with the utmost violence, he smashed them to atoms, and let out so large a quantity of oil that it covered the ground and ran out at the door.

'Hulloa!' cried the soldier, who was sitting outside; 'what! more mischief here?'

Presently out came the old shop-keeper, fuming with rage,



and crying: 'Ah, you villain of a thief, we'll see what the king will say to this!' And she joined company with the other complainants, and all went forward and entered into the king's presence.

The king was at this time in his court hearing cases and administering justice. When he saw Lull and his four accusers at the door, he called them forward to his judgment-seat, and bade them state their business. The first to speak was the soldier. 'O king, I hired this man,' said he, 'to carry five rupees' worth of ghee for your highness' kitchen, but he dropped it in the street, and it was all wasted.'

Then the king turned to Lull and said : 'What is your name?'

'My name is Lull,' answered the lad. 'This soldier is complaining about his pen'orth of ghee ; but if the king will lend me his ears, I will state the case truly.'

The king nodding assent, Lull proceeded : 'I agreed with the soldier to carry his butter for three ha'pence. As I went along I began to think what I should do with so large a sum. I would buy a hen and hatch chickens and sell them. Then I would buy a sheep and have lambs and sell them. Then I would buy a cow and have calves and sell them. Then I would have a milch buffalo and have baby buffaloes and sell them. And lastly, I should buy a fine mare and go riding among the girls and choose me a wife, and get children four or five. And I was just fancying myself in the midst of them, petting them and tousling them, and I merely took down my hand from the jar to pat their dear little heads, when crash ! down came the jar, and all the butter ran away. But was I to blame, O king, seeing I lost so much myself?'

When the king heard this he perceived that Lull was a merry fool, and he began to laugh. As fools were his delight, he felt very well inclined to him, and, turning to the soldier, he gave sentence thus : 'Soldier, for the sake of three pice this poor fellow has lost his all, and, in short, ruined himself, for he has lost his fowls, his sheep, his cows, his buffaloes, his mare, and even his poor little children ; while all you have lost is five rupees. Stand aside ; he is forgiven. I dismiss the case.'

The king then called forward the next accuser, upon which the buniah advanced and gave his evidence thus : 'This miserable man, my lord, whom I have never injured, struck my mule with that staff of his and killed it.'

'Did you kill this buniah's mule, Lull?' asked the king.

'Yes, I did,' answered Lull ; 'but, O king, let the buniah witness whether he did not request me to do so, crying out again and again : "O traveller, traveller, give my mule a couple of cracks !" I merely struck his animal once.'

'Soldier, what have you to say to this?' the king then asked. 'Is Lull's statement true or false?'

'My lord, it is true,' answered the soldier.

'Then,' said the king to the buniah, 'this misfortune is surely no one's fault but your own. Ho, guard, give this false witness half a dozen stripes and turn him into the street !'

So the unfortunate buniah was led off in disgrace.

Then the poor old woman whose house was on fire began her pitiful story : 'This man, O king, both cut off my husband's head and burnt up my house. I ask for justice.'

'Can this be possible, Lull ?' asked the king.

'Yes,' answered Lull, 'it is true enough. But she asked me again and again to give her the story of the death of the ten-headed god, and to show her how Lanka was taken, and I merely obeyed her.'

As the old woman could not deny this, Lull continued : 'I thought it was best to explain to her properly how it was done, for deeds are always better than words, and so I showed her properly in order that there might be no mistake.'

To the woman the king then said : 'As this appears to be the case, the prisoner must be acquitted. Be more careful another time, and meanwhile my servants will provide you with a dwelling.' So this case also was dismissed.

Then lastly the oil-seller came forward and accused Lull of having wantonly and maliciously smashed the whole of her oil vessels and spilt the oil, thereby ruining her for ever. 'Did you do this thing, Lull ?' said the king.

'Yes, O king, I did,' answered Lull.

'And why did you ?' returned the king.

'I went into the shop to buy four cowries' worth of oil to oil my hair before coming into your highness' presence ; but the oil ran away between my fingers, and the woman told me how lucky I was to have spilt it, and I thought to myself : " If spilling a little of her oil brings me luck, spilling the whole of her oil will bring me and her and everyone still more luck." So I spilt it as much for herself as for me.'

Then the king, addressing himself to the woman, said : 'Woman, you must have known this poor fellow was an idiot, and you should have been more careful of your speech. It is quite evident that he broke your vessels of oil because

he thought you were not strong enough to break them for yourself. He wished you to have all the luck in the world. But the original fault lay with yourself.'

So the king, greatly amused, dismissed this case as well, and ordered the prisoner to be discharged.



Lull then joyfully betook himself home to his mother, who said : ' Lull, Lull, I have been in the greatest agony of mind about you ! What became of you ? ' And to his mother Lull told all his adventures from first to last. And when she had heard them through, she said :

' My Lull does everything upside down ;
God brings it together as right as a crown.'



XIV.

THE SAINT AND THE PILGRIM.

THERE was a certain saint, by name Abul Hassan, whose power and sanctity were noised all over the country. One day a pilgrim came from a distant land for the sole purpose of seeing him, but when he called at the house he found that he was absent. 'Where has he gone?' inquired he of his wife. Now, the saint's wife was a hard woman, bitter and peevish in speech, and instead of answering the question, she



began to abuse her husband with unmeasured violence, so that, hearing her words, the pilgrim lost all faith in the holiness of the person he had travelled so far to see. As he left the house, he said to some of the neighbours: 'This saint of yours—where is he?' They answered: 'He has gone to the hills to gather sticks.'

'Though I no longer believe in him,' said the pilgrim to himself, 'I will at least look upon his face before I return.'

So he set out forthwith for the jungle, but he had not proceeded far when he met the holy man face to face. His wood was borne before him by a tiger, and in his hand,

instead of a whip, he carried a snake. Then the pilgrim fell at his feet and said : ' At the reproachful words of your wife my faith decreased, but I now believe that verily you are a saint indeed. Pray forgive me !'

' He who will exercise invincible patience,' answered the saint, ' especially with a shrew of a wife, shall command the very tigers, and they will obey him, for patience is rewarded of God. But a scolding wife can no man tame, seeing she is the very fiend himself.'



XV.

THE LOVE OF MONEY.

A MISER once found his way into the bazaar to buy bread. The weather was unusually warm, and as he trudged along the perspiration gathered round the coin, which was closely clutched in his hand. Arresting his steps, he gazed at the moist piece with a fond eye and said : ' I won't spend you, then. Weep not, dear friend ; we shall not separate, after all—I will starve first !' So he restored the money to his bag, and begged for scraps from door to door.



XVI.

CHARACTERISTIC PRIDE OF THE
BANÉYRWALS.

A POOR man of Banéyr, unable to support himself in his native mountains, set out for Hindustán to seek his fortune, and there rose to the rank of nawáb. One of his poor relations, hearing of his good fortune, determined to visit him. So he went to the bazaar, and with a few annas bought

one pound of sugar as a neighbourly present for his former acquaintance. After a long journey he arrived at the palace, and found the nawáb in the midst of his fine friends. But though he winked and nodded and beckoned to him to step aside for a friendly greeting, and to receive his pound of sugar, his efforts to engage the great man's attention were quite unsuccessful. At last, perceiving that his unwelcome visitor was about to open his mouth, the nawáb said to one of his attendants: 'Conduct this poor stranger to my store-room, where my bags of sugar are laid up, and there let him sit down and eat his fill.' Then he caused a letter to be written to his native village sternly forbidding any more of his poor ill-clad kinsmen to trouble him with their objectionable presence.



XVII.

THE FALSE WITNESS.*

A CARAVAN of merchants came and pitched for the night at a certain spot on the way down to Hindustán. In the morning it was found that the back of one of the camels was so sore that it was considered inexpedient to load him again, and he was turned loose into the wilderness. So they left him behind. The camel, after grazing about the whole day, became exceedingly thirsty, and meeting a jackal, he said to him: 'Uncle, uncle, I am very thirsty; can you show me some water?'

'I can show you water,' said the jackal; 'but if I do, you must agree to give me a good feed of meat from your sore back.'

* This story is intended as a satire on the universal practice prevailing among the natives of India of getting up false cases and procuring false witness in courts of law.

'I do agree,' replied the camel; 'and now show me the water.'

So he followed his small friend until they came to a running stream, where he drank such quantities of water that the jackal thought he was never going to stop. Then, turning to the jackal, he invited him to his repast. 'Come, uncle,' said he, 'you can now make your supper off my sore back.'

'Nay,' answered the jackal, 'you forget. Our agreement was not that. It was, dear nephew, that I should have a



meal of your tongue,* not of your wretched old back. This you distinctly promised if I would take you to water.'

'Very well,' replied the camel; 'bring forward your witness to prove your words, and you can have it so.'

'My witness I have handy,' said the jackal, 'and in two minutes he will be here.'

So, going to the wolf, he pitched him a lying tale, and persuaded him to bear false witness. 'You see, wolf,' remarked he, 'if I eat his tongue he will certainly die, and then we shall both have grand feeds, and all our friends can come and feast as well; but no one could possibly touch the

* 'Sore back' in Panjābi being *chīgh*, and tongue *jīb*, there was sufficient similarity of sound to suggest prevarication.

flesh of a sore back.' So the two made their way to the camel, and the jackal, appealing to the wolf, began: 'What was the bargain? Did he not agree that if I would take him to water he would give me his tongue?'

'That was the bargain, most certainly,' asserted the wolf, 'and the camel agreed. Sitting behind that rock, I overheard the whole affair.'

'Be it so,' said the camel. 'As you both delight in lies, and have no consciences, come along, Mr. Jackal, and devour my tongue.' With which words he lowered his long neck until his head was on a level with his diminutive foe. But the latter then said to the wolf: 'O friend, you see what a morsel I am! I am much too weak to pull out that enormous tongue. Could you not seize it and hold it for me?'

Then the wolf ventured his head into the camel's mouth to pull forward the tongue, but the camel instantly closed his powerful jaws, and, crushing the skull of his enemy, shook him to death. Meanwhile, the jackal danced and skipped with glee, crying out:

'Behold the fate of the false witness! behold the fate of the false witness!'



XVIII.

THE KING AND THE PARROT.



IN former days, when birds possessed the gift of speech, and were as intelligent as the wisest statesmen, there lived a certain king who took much pleasure in a favourite parrot. It was the greatest delight of his life to caress her, to converse with her, and to feed her with dainty scraps from his own hands as she stood perched on his royal knee, while the lovely-plumaged bird, coyly reciprocating the king's attachment, manifested her love for him in a thousand endearing ways and by the prettiest of speeches.

One day, in the warm early spring-time, just as the tender willows by the mill-stream were beginning to put on their bright clothing of green, the parrot addressed her petition to her master in these words :

'O king, it is now a long long time since I left my home. Give me leave to fly away and visit the well-loved spot once more.'

But the king refused her request, not finding it possible to part with her. It was only after many solicitations, extending over many days, that at last he granted a very sorrowful permission.

'Go, dear bird,' said he, 'and visit your own native clime. When six months have fled, then come back to me once more, and when you come, remember to bring me some sure token that your love has never diminished.'

'Absent or present, O king,' answered the parrot, 'I shall love you still the same.'

So the king and his favourite had a most tender parting, with many a sweet little kiss to be remembered by them

both thereafter. And then the parrot spread out her golden wings and started for her own home, flying from tree to tree and from hill to hill for many a league.

But the king, who knew the direction of her flight, had commanded some of his courtiers to follow her and to observe



her doings. It was a long and a weary journey. One hundred miles at least did the courtiers travel through the woods. At last they came to a barren plain, quite destitute of vegetation, over which the wind howled dismally. At the end of this plain their further progress was barred by a mighty river, which they could by no means cross over. As they were preparing to retrace their steps they noticed a few solitary trees growing near the brink of the water. On the drooping branch of one of them was built a nest, and upon the nest, to their joy and surprise, sat the king's favourite parrot; while ever and anon a gust of the keen wind would come and rudely bend the fragile bough with its precious burden and dip it into the chilly water.

Having noticed these things, the courtiers once more returned to the palace, and reported to the king all that they had witnessed. Naturally the king was astonished that a bird so wise and sensible, able to command the most beauti-

ful lodging and the daintiest food, should prefer exile in a desolate place amid want and privation. But, as he had a thoughtful and a sagacious mind, he began to reflect on a circumstance so extraordinary, and at last, addressing his court, he said :

‘ This is only an instance of a true instinct. Be it ever so poor and humble, its own proper home is what the heart of every living creature must yearn after the most, and it is the will of God that the parrot should love her poor wet nest of sticks on the blown willow before all the palaces in the world.’

The six months had nearly expired when the parrot, having reared and forsaken a vigorous brood of young ones, prepared to set out for the king’s palace. But first, remembering her promised *gage d’amour*, she visited the beautiful Garden of the Fairies, and from an enchanted tree which grew in the middle of it she selected two small rosy apples, and then continued her flight. Having arrived at court, her



presence was at once announced, and she was welcomed with every manifestation of joy. Then she presented her two apples, as tokens that her love had never suffered diminution during all her weary absence. But the king, full

of suspicions, as kings are so apt to be, eyed them askance, and to test their virtues he threw one of them to his favourite hound. The dog greedily devoured it, but scarcely had he



done so when the poor animal was seized with horrible convulsions and expired in agony. Without a moment's consideration the king rose up, anger darting from his eyes, and, seizing his unfortunate parrot, he instantly wrung her neck. This done, he ordered that the remaining apple should be cast out.

Now, this apple was endowed with magic power, and as it happened that, when it was thrown from the casement, it fell into the king's garden, it soon began to grow; and though it did not grow so high as the clouds, it quickly became a goodly tree, bearing quantities of fruit. It need scarcely be said that no one about the palace ever dreamed of approaching it. Indeed, the king had issued a law that no one should go within fifty yards of it, and on account of its supposed deadly qualities it was known far and wide as *THE TREE OF DEATH*.

The king's garden was very large and extensive, and in one of its remote corners, just behind the royal stables, there stood a lowly hut in which dwelt an old sweeper and his

wife, whose business it was to keep clean the stalls. They were both very miserable, being poor, aged and infirm. One night, as they were meditating on their sad and forlorn condition, the sweeper said to his wife :

‘ See how wretched we are ! Life has become intolerable. As we have now lived too long, let us eat some of the fruit of the Tree of Death, and so die together.’

This was no sooner said than done, and the man or the woman, one or the other, went out and plucked the forbidden fruit, and they made what they believed to be their last meal of it. But lo ! now a miracle, for these two old creatures, instead of instantly falling down dead as they expected, became suddenly endowed with youth and beauty, and into all their limbs began to flow a feeling of renewed vigour and strength.

Early the next morning down came the master of the horse, and when he perceived two persons whom he supposed to be perfect strangers in the royal garden he demanded of them who they were, and by what means they had entered.



‘ We are not intruders,’ answered they. ‘ We are the two poor old sweepers who have lived in this hut this many a day. Being weary of living, we have eaten of the fruit of

the Tree of Death, hoping to die ; but, by the blessing of God, instead of dying, we have both become young again.'

When the master of the horse had heard this wonderful account he was surprised, and, commanding them to follow him, he ushered them into the immediate presence of the king.

'These two persons,' said he, 'have strange tidings for you, O king.'

So to the king they related all that had befallen them, having first of all fallen on their knees and implored his pardon for their transgression of the laws.

At first the king was so incredulous that he felt inclined to order them forth to instant execution ; but at the request



of his master of the horse he spared them, in order to test the truth of their statement.

Calling one of the most aged of his nobles, he bade him go forth and gather some of the mysterious fruit which had wrought such miracles. The old courtier instantly hobbled away, and when he returned he held in his hand a small basket of the tiny rose-red apples.

'Behold, sire,' said he ; 'I have obeyed your command.'

'Now eat!' exclaimed the monarch. And the old man,

not without many misgivings, proceeded to eat one of the shining morsels. Then, indeed, the mind of the bewildered king became satisfied, when before his very eyes he saw his wrinkled servant gradually assuming the lineaments of a glorious youth. It was small wonder that this mighty potentate forgot the dignity of his position, and, rising from his seat, sprang forward to taste so delicious a repast. The whole of the court was permitted to follow his example, and in a single day all the lords and ladies of the palace who had passed the heyday of their strength and beauty became young and blooming once more.

The king now sent for his diviners and soothsayers to interpret for him so singular a wonder, and to explain the mystery of the apple which had killed his dog. Having arranged their enchantments and worked their various spells, they one and all agreed that the first apple had been licked by a serpent, which had lain hidden in the tree of the Garden of the Fairies, and that its venomous saliva, adhering to the fruit, had caused the death of the dog, but that the parrot was in no way to blame. We may feel quite sure that the king, who was noble and generous at heart, had reason then to mourn over the fate of his beloved bird. He made what amends he could, for he erected in her honour a magnificent shrine, where she was ever afterwards adored as a saint, not only by his own subjects, but by pilgrims from all parts of the known world.



XIX.

THE OLD WEAVER AND THE CAMEL'S
FOOTPRINTS.



ONE night a camel trespassing in a weaver's field left there the marks of his feet. In the morning the owner brought to the spot the oldest weaver in the village, expecting that he would be able to explain what manner of animal had trodden down his corn. The old man, on seeing the footprints, both laughed and cried. Said the people: 'O father, you both laugh and cry! What does this mean?'

'I cry,' said he, 'because I think to myself, "What will these poor children do for someone to explain these things to them when I am dead," and I laugh because, as for these footprints, I know not what they are.'



XX.

GREEBA, THE WEAVER.

AT the village of Bhurân lived an old weaver named Greeba, who, for a wonder, was shrewd enough. It happened that Habeeb Khân, the lumbardâr, laid a tax on the weavers' houses at the rate of two rupees for every doorway. When Greeba heard of this, he tore down his door, and, laying it on his shoulders, carried it off to the khan's. 'Here, khan,' said he, with a profound salaam, 'I have heard you want doorways, so I have brought you mine. I also hear you want the side-walls, and I am now going to fetch them, too.' Hearing this, the khan laughed, and said: 'O Greeba, the weaver, take back your door; your tax is paid.'



XXI.

EESARA AND CANEESARA.



poverty.

One day Caneesara came to the house of Eesara and said: 'Lend us something—some money, or some grain, or some bread—we have absolutely nothing to eat.'

'O friend,' answered Eesara, 'you are not in worse plight than we are. We are quite destitute of everything. What can I give you?'

So Caneesara's visit was fruitless, and he returned empty-handed as he had come.

After he had gone, Eesara said to his wife: 'All we have

OME years ago there lived two merchants, a Hindoo and a Mahomedan, who were partners in the same business. The name of the Hindoo was Eesara, and the name of the Mahomedan was Caneesara. They had once been extremely well off, but hard times had come upon them, their business had declined, and they had gradually sunk into

is a brass plate and a single brass cup. As the plate is of value, put it for safety into a net and hang it from the roof over our beds; and put some water in the plate, so that if Caneesara comes into the house to steal it when we are asleep, the water will spill on our faces and we shall awake.'

That very night Caneesara, who knew of the brass plate, determined to make an effort to become possessed of it. So, long after the inmates were in bed, he visited the house of Eesara, and, softly lifting the latch, stole into the apartment. There, in the faint light of the moon, he saw the plate hanging in a net over the beds, but, being a cunning fellow and suspecting a trick, he first put his forefinger through the net



and discovered that the plate contained water. To avoid detection, he now took up some sand, and, with the utmost care, dropped it gradually into the plate, until the whole of the water was absorbed. Having accomplished this, he slowly abstracted the plate from the net and made off with it.

On his way home he considered that his wisest course would be to hide the plate for a short time until he met with an opportunity of selling it. Going, therefore, to a tank, he waded into it some distance, and buried it in the mud, and in order to mark the place he stuck in a long reed which he

had plucked on the margin. Then, perfectly satisfied with his success, he went home and got into bed.

The next morning, when Eesara awoke, he missed the plate, and cried: 'O wife, Caneesara has been here. He has stolen the plate.'

Going at once to his friend's house, he searched it high and low, but returned home no wiser than he was before. As the day was far spent, he went out to the tank for his accustomed bath. When he arrived at the edge of the water, he observed the solitary reed nodding in the wind, and said: 'Hallo! this was not here yesterday. This is some trick of Caneesara's.' So he waded into the water, and had the satisfaction of discovering his missing plate, which he carried home to his wife, but he left the tell-tale reed undisturbed.

After a day or two Caneesara came down to the tank, and wading out to his reed, began to grope among the mud for the brass plate, but he groped in vain. 'Ah!' groaned he, 'Eesara has been here.' Vexed and disappointed, he returned to his house and smoked his hookah.

Caneesara now visited his partner once more, and said to him: 'Friend Eesara, we are both as badly off as we can be. Let us now go together to some other country, and let us take our account-books with us, and see if by hook or by crook we cannot make some money.' To this proposal Eesara agreed, and the two friends set out on their travels.

After a weary tramp they arrived at a city in which a rich merchant had recently died, and by inquiry they found that, his body having been burnt, his remains had been duly laid in a certain place. Then Eesara, by tampering with the ledgers which he had brought with him from his own home, concocted a tremendous bill against the defunct merchant, ingeniously running up the amount to forty thousand rupees. When night set in, the two friends went to the place of sepulture, and dug out a chamber, in which Caneesara hid himself, while Eesara covered him over with sticks and earth, and, in short, managed his task so well that in the morning no one would have suspected that the ground had been disturbed at all. Eesara, armed with his account-books, went presently to the house of the sons of the dead merchant, and said to them:

‘Both your father and your grandfather were in debt to the house of which I am a partner. The total sum due to us is forty thousand rupees, and payment is requested without more delay.’

The sons at first attempted to brave it out. ‘Not a farthing do we owe you,’ said they. ‘Why was not this monstrous claim sent in before?’

‘The claim is true,’ replied Eesara, ‘and the money is owing in full. I appeal to your dead father. Let him be the judge. I cite you to appear with me at his grave.’

The two sons, thus solemnly charged, accompanied their pretended creditor to their father’s grave. Now, the dead man’s name was Bahnooshâh.

‘O Bahnooshâh,’ cried Eesara, ‘thou model of honour and probity, hear and answer! Are you indebted in the sum of forty thousand rupees to the house of Eesara and Caneesara, or are you not?’

Three times was this appeal made with a loud voice over the grave, and in answer to the third appeal Caneesara spoke in a sepulchral tone from the bowels of the earth: ‘Oh, my sons,’ cried he, ‘if you are faithful to my memory, leave not this weight of woe on my soul, but pay the money at once.’

The sons were overwhelmed, and, dropping on their knees, promised to fulfil the request of the dead. They then returned home, and taking Eesara into their counting-house, paid him over the sum demanded, and presented him with a mule in addition to carry away the burden. Eesara, who was beyond measure enchanted with the success of his stratagem, forgot in the full flow of his happiness to return for his partner, and having mounted the mule and ensconced himself in comfort between the saddle-bags, he made haste to get out of the town.

By this time Caneesara, beginning to tire of being pent up in his dark, narrow lodging, was thinking to himself: ‘Strange! Why does not Eesara come back with news?’ And, unable to bear the suspense any longer, he burst open his frail tenement and entered the town. Going to the house of the deluded merchants, he inquired for one named Eesara, and learnt that he had just received the amount of

the debt, and had departed. 'There he goes,' said they, 'on yonder mule.' Following with his eyes the direction indicated, he saw Eesara astride of the mule going up a neighbouring hill, and occasionally belabouring his stubborn animal with a cudgel. 'Ha! ha!' laughed Caneesara, 'so Eesara is leaving me in the lurch.' And he began to follow him.

Now, as Eesara jogged along he saw a handsome gold-embroidered shoe lying upon the road; but he was too proud in the possession of his newly-acquired wealth to regard such a trifle as an odd shoe, however embroidered, and he



continued his way without dismounting. When Caneesara arrived at the spot, however, he picked up the shoe, and a happy thought striking him, he ran at the top of his speed round by some rocks along a by-way and joined the main track again some distance ahead of Eesara. There he laid down the shoe in the middle of the road, and hid himself in a bush.

Eesara, riding up as happy as a king, turned a projecting corner of the road and at once espied the shoe. Reining up his mule, he gazed at it and cried: 'Ha! here's the fellow of the shoe I left behind—the same pattern and everything.' And, dismounting, he picked up the shoe, tied his mule to

the very bush in which Caneesara was in hiding, and ran back as hard as he could go for the supposed fellow. The moment he was out of sight Caneesara got down from the bush, mounted the mule, and rode off at a full pace.

Now, Eesara, of course, looked for the fellow-shoe in vain, and, what was still harder to bear, he returned to the bush to find his mule gone. 'Ha!' said he, 'Caneesara has been here!' And he hastened on foot towards his own village.

Meanwhile Caneesara was also pressing on with all speed. He arrived at his home in the middle of the night, and without a word to any of his neighbours he unloaded the mule and drove it away into the forest. He then summoned his wife, and the two between them carried the bags of money into the house and buried them under the mud floor. But being afraid of unpleasant questions if he met Eesara just then, he absented himself from home, charging his wife not to reveal the fact of his arrival.

Eesara, by no means despairing, arrived at his own house and related his adventures to his wife, who agreed with him in his opinion that the money had been taken by Caneesara. 'And what is more,' said Eesara, 'he has buried it in his house.'

The next night the wife of Eesara invited the wife of Caneesara to spend a few hours with her, and during the interval Eesara visited the house of his partner and successfully dug up the money, after which he restored the floor to its former appearance. Taking the hoard to his own house, which he entered after the departure of Caneesara's wife, he buried it in like manner under the floor of his chamber. He then went off and hid himself in an old dry well, directing his wife to bring him his food at a certain hour every day.

By this time Caneesara had ventured to return to his home, and choosing a proper time for the purpose, he dug up the floor of his house, stopping now and then to chuckle with his wife over the success of his stratagem. But, alas! the money was nowhere to be found, and he laboured in vain. 'Ha!' cried he, throwing down his spade, 'Eesara has been here!' Then he considered within himself: 'Eesara

has taken away the money, but instead of looking for the money I shall now look for Eesara himself.'

Caneesara now watched in the neighbourhood of Eesara's house night and day, and observing that his wife always went out at the same hour, he began to suspect that she must be taking her husband's food somewhere. So he dogged her footsteps at a safe distance, and discovered that she made for the old well. There he watched her from behind a boulder, and saw her take bread and buttermilk from under her veil, and lower the food with a piece of string down the well. After a time he noticed that she drew up the empty vessel, and, with a few words to the person below, returned to the town. 'Ha, ha!' laughed Caneesara, 'Eesara is here; he is down that well! But where can the money be?'

That night Caneesara made up some atrociously bad bread, and the next day he disguised himself as a woman in a long red cloth, and taking with him the bread, a vessel, and a piece of string, he went out to the well and lowered down the food.

'Oh, you cursed woman!' cried Eesara in a rage, 'what bread is this you have brought me?'

'O husband!' answered Caneesara in feigned tones, 'you rail at your poor wife, but what am I to do without money?'

'You wretched woman!' said Eesara, 'you know that under the floor of our old house there are bags and bags of money! Why can't you take a rupee occasionally and buy me decent victuals?'

Caneesara, having heard quite enough for his purpose, pulled up the empty vessel and took himself off. He passed the real wife on his way into town, and going straight to the house, he abstracted the whole of the money, and carried it to his own house; but this time he buried it in the garden.

Meanwhile, Eesara's wife, having arrived at the well, let down her husband's food. Eesara, when he saw the suspended vessel again bobbing in front of him, cried out: 'Hullo! you here again? It is not half an hour since you were here before!'

‘What are you talking about?’ answered the woman. ‘I have not been near you since this time yesterday.’

‘Ah!’ exclaimed Eesara with a groan, ‘is it so? Then Caneesara has been here, and we are undone again!’

So he climbed up by the loose masonry and came out of the well. ‘Now let us go home,’ said he, ‘and look after the money.’ When he came to his house it was too evident that the place had been rifled, and having plied his shovel to no purpose, he rushed off to the house of Caneesara. His wily partner, however, was nowhere to be found, nor with all his searching and digging could he light on the slightest trace of the lost treasure. At last, baffled and disappointed, he went back to his wife and got her to lay him out as if he were dead, and to bewail him after the custom of his people. Then came the neighbours bearing bundles of wood, and a funeral-pyre was erected to burn his body. Caneesara, hearing of these lugubrious preparations, said to himself: ‘All this, I fear, is only some trick of my old friend;’ and he went to the house and asked permission to view the body. ‘This merchant who is dead was a friend of mine,’ said he. But they drove him out of the place, saying: ‘No, no; you are a Mahomedan.’

Eesara was now carried out of the house on a stretcher and laid on the top of the funeral-pyre, while blankets and clothes were held round to keep off the gaze of the multitude. Just as the torches were applied, and the smoke began to envelop him, and while the confusion was at its height, he slipped out of his shroud, and, taking advantage of the darkness, he managed to escape from the scene unobserved. His first act was to go again to the house of Caneesara, feeling satisfied that he must by that time have ventured to return; but the latter, full of suspicion and in dread of his life, still kept out of the way. So Eesara’s search was a complete failure. ‘I cannot find the money,’ said he; ‘but Caneesara I am determined to hunt out, and then we shall have an account to settle.’

Caneesara now resolved to feign death in his turn. ‘Eesara has not deceived me,’ said he; ‘but if I can deceive Eesara, I will return some night, dig up the money,

and be off to other parts.' So first of all a rumour was circulated that he was very ill; then it was asserted that he was dead; and his wife, to keep up the deceit, laid him out and bewailed him with shrieks and moaning cries. When the neighbours came about, they said: 'Alas! it is poor Caneesara!' And they ordered his shroud and carried his body to the grave. There they laid it down upon the earth, close by the tomb of an old hermit, for the customary observances, and Eesara, who had followed the mourners, contrived to get a peep at his friend's face, saying: 'This poor man, as you know, was a crony of mine.' Having satisfied his doubts, he climbed into a tree, which was near the grave, and waited there until, the rites being completed, the body was laid in its chamber. As soon as the company had dispersed, night having now set in, Eesara got down from the tree, crept to the old tomb, and, lifting up the slab, dragged out the body alive and laid it down by the edge of the grave. Just then the noise of approaching footsteps and subdued whispers caught his attention, and he again got into the tree, wondering what this interruption could be.

The party which now approached was a gang of notorious robbers, seven in number, one of whom was blind of an eye. Catching sight of the body in the old tomb, they examined it with great care, and exclaimed: 'See, this must be some famous saint! He has come out of his grave, and his body is perfectly fresh. Let us pray to him for favour and good luck!' So they one and all fell down on their knees and besought his assistance. 'We are pledged to a robbery this night,' said they. 'If we are successful, O saint, into your mouth we shall drop some sugar.' The one-eyed man, however, said: 'As for me, I shall tickle his throat with some water.'

Having made their vows, they all set out for the town, robbed a rich man's house, and returned, each one bearing his own bag of money, to the graveyard. They now dropped morsels of sugar into Caneesara's mouth in accordance with their promises; but when it came to the turn of the robber of the one eye, he dropped in some vile water. Poor Caneesara

had accepted the sugar with stolid indifference; but the water, tickling his gullet, nearly choked him, and he began to cough most violently. Precisely at this moment Eesara, who had been an absorbed observer of the scene, suddenly shrieked out in menacing tones: 'Never mind the fellows behind; catch the rascal who is standing in front!'

These unexpected words sounded in the robbers' ears like the voice of the black angel, and imagining themselves in the midst of evil spirits, they took to their heels and incontinently ran away, leaving their bags of money behind them by the open grave.

The dead Caneesara now sprang to his feet, crying out: 'Ha! ha! Eesara is here, and I have caught him at last!' And as the latter had descended from the tree, the two friends embraced each other most cordially. Picking up the seven bags of gold, they entered the old tomb, where they



managed to light one of the little earthenware lamps belonging to the shrine, and by dint of drawing the feeble flame close enough, they poured out the glittering heaps, and proceeded to settle their accounts. They were, however, unable to agree about a balance of a single farthing; and

their words began to run high, each of them asserting his claim with tremendous warmth.

By this time the robbers, having come to a halt, deputed their one-eyed companion to return and look for the money. One-eyed men are proverbially cunning, and this one was determined not to impair his reputation. Creeping quietly along, he arrived at the tomb as the dispute was in full career; but, alas! he was seen; and just as his head appeared through one of the holes in the wall, Caneesara suddenly snatched off the fellow's turban, and, handing it to Eesara, cried, 'Here, then, is your farthing; so now we are quits!' The robber, drawing back his head with the utmost despatch, ran as fast as his legs could carry him to his confederates, and told them: 'The number of demons in that old tomb is so immense that the share of each of them comes to only a single farthing! Let us get away, or we shall all be caught and hanged!' So, in a great fright, they left the place on the instant, and never returned again.

Then said the wily Caneesara to the wily Eesara: 'With the forty thousand rupees which I possess already, my share of this capture is one bag, and these other six bags are therefore yours.'

The two friends were now equally rich; and returning to their homes, they bought lands and houses, and defied poverty for the rest of their days, living together with their wives and children in the utmost happiness and in the enjoyment of every blessing.



XXII.

THE STORY OF THE KING AND THE FOUR GIRLS.



HERE was once a king who, during the day, used to sit on his throne and dispense justice, but who at night was accustomed to disguise himself and to wander about the streets of his city looking for adventures.

One evening he was passing by a certain garden when he observed four young girls sitting under a tree, and conversing together in earnest tones. Curious to overhear the subject of their discourse, he stopped to listen. The first said: 'I think of all tastes the pleasantest in the world is the taste of meat.'

'I do not agree with you,' said the second; 'there is nothing so good as the taste of wine.'

'No, no,' cried the third; 'you are both mistaken, for of all tastes the sweetest is the taste of love.'

'Meat and wine and love are all doubtless sweet,' remarked the fourth girl; 'but in my opinion nothing can equal the taste of telling lies.'

The girls then separated, and went to their homes; and the king, who had listened to their remarks with lively interest and with much wonder, took note of the houses into which they went, and, having marked each of the doors with chalk, he returned to his palace.

The next morning he called his vizier, and said to him: 'Send to the narrow street, and bring before me the owners of the four houses the doors of which have a round mark in chalk upon them.' The vizier at once went in person, and brought to the court the four men who lived in the houses to which the king had referred. Then said the king to them, 'Have not you four men four daughters?'

'We have,' answered they.

'Bring the girls hither before me,' said the king.

But the men objected, saying: 'It would be very wrong that our daughters should approach the palace of the king.'

'Nay,' said the king; 'if the girls are your daughters, they are mine too, besides which you can bring them privately.'

So the king sent four separate litters, curtained in the usual manner, and the four girls were thus brought to the palace and conducted into a large reception-room. Then he summoned them one by one to his presence as he required them. To the first girl he said: 'O daughter, what were you



talking about last night when you sat with your companions under the tree?'

'I was not telling tales against you, O king,' answered she.

'I do not mean that,' said the king; 'but I wish to know what you were saying.'

'I merely said,' replied she, 'that the taste of meat was the pleasantest.'

'Whose daughter, then, are you?' inquired the king.

'I am the daughter of a Bhábrá,' answered she.

'But,' said the king, 'if you are one of the Bhábrá tribe, who never touch meat, what do you know of the taste of it? So strict are they, that when they drink water they put a

cloth over the mouth of the vessel, lest they should swallow even an insect.'

Then said the girl: 'Yes, that is quite true, but, from my own observation, I think meat must be exceedingly pleasant to the palate. Near our house there is a butcher's shop, and I often notice that when people buy meat none of it is wasted or thrown away; therefore it must be precious. I also notice that, when people have eaten the flesh, the very bones are greedily seized upon by the dogs, nor do they leave them until they have picked them as clean as a lance-head. And even after that, the crows come and carry them off, and when the crows have done with them, the very ants assemble together and swarm over them. Those are the reasons which prove that the taste of flesh-meat must be exceedingly pleasant.'

The king, hearing her argument, was pleased, and said: 'Yes, daughter, meat is very pleasant as food; everyone likes it.' And he sent her away with a handsome present.

The second girl was then introduced, and of her the king inquired likewise: 'What were you talking about last night under the tree?'

'I said nothing about you, O king,' answered she.

'That is true, but what did you say?' asked the king.

'What I said,' replied she, 'was that there was no taste like the taste of wine.'

'But whose daughter are you?' continued the king.

'I am,' said she, 'the daughter of a priest.'

'A good joke, forsooth,' said the king, smiling. 'Priests hate the very name of wine. Then, what do you know of the taste of it?'

Then said the girl: 'It is true I never touch wine, but I can easily understand how pleasant it is. I learn my lessons on the top of my father's house. Below are the wine-shops. One day I saw two men nicely dressed, who came with their servants to buy wine at those shops, and there they sat and drank. After a time they got up and went away, but they staggered about from side to side, and I thought to myself: "Here are these fellows rolling about, knocking themselves against the wall on this side, and

falling against the wall on that : surely they will never drink wine again !” However, I was mistaken, for the next day they came again and did the very same thing, and I considered : “ Wine must be very delicious to the taste, or else these persons would never have returned for more of it.” ’

Then said the king : ‘ Yes, O daughter, you are right ; the taste of wine is very pleasant.’ And, giving her also a handsome present, he sent her home.

When the third girl entered the room, the king asked her in like manner : ‘ O daughter, what were you talking about last night under the tree ?’

‘ O king,’ answered she, ‘ I made no reference to you.’

‘ Quite so,’ said the king ; ‘ but tell me what it was you were saying.’

‘ I was saying,’ replied she, ‘ that there is no taste in the world so sweet as the taste of love-making.’

‘ But,’ said the king, ‘ you are a very young girl, what can you know about love-making ? Whose daughter are you ?’

‘ I am the daughter of a bard,’ answered she. ‘ It is true I am very young, but somehow I guess that love-making must be pleasant. My mother suffered so much when my little brother was born that she never expected to live. Yet, after a little time, she went back to her old ways and welcomed her lovers just the same as before. That is the reason I think that love-making must be so pleasant.’*

‘ What you say,’ observed the king, ‘ cannot, O daughter, be justly denied.’ And he gave her a present equal in value to those of her friends and sent her, also, away.

When the fourth girl was introduced, the king put the same question to her : ‘ Tell me what you and your companions talked about under the tree last night.’

‘ It was not about the king,’ answered she.

‘ Nevertheless,’ asked he, ‘ what was it you said ?’

‘ Those who tell lies, said I, must tell them because they find the practice agreeable,’ replied she.

‘ Whose daughter are you ?’ inquired the king.

* The caste of the professional bard (*mirāsī*) is very low. Their women are generally ‘ dancing-girls.’

‘I am the daughter of a farmer,’ answered the girl.

‘And what made you think there was pleasure in telling lies?’ asked the king.

The girl answered saucily : ‘Oh, you yourself will tell lies some day!’

‘How?’ said the king. ‘What can you mean?’

The girl answered : ‘If you will give me two lacs of rupees, and six months to consider, I will promise to prove my words.’

So the king gave the girl the sum of money she asked for, and agreed to her conditions, sending her away with a present similar to those of the others.

After six months he called her to his presence again, and reminded her of her promise. Now, in the interval the girl had built a fine palace far away in the forest, upon which she had expended the wealth which the king had given to her. It was beautifully adorned with carvings and paintings, and furnished with silk and satin. So she now said to the king : ‘Come with me, and you shall see God.’ Taking with him two of his ministers, the king set out, and by the evening they all arrived at the palace.

‘This palace is the abode of God,’ said the girl. ‘But He will reveal Himself only to one person at a time, and He will not reveal Himself even to him unless he was born in lawful wedlock. Therefore, while the rest remain without, let each of you enter in order.’

‘Be it so,’ said the King. ‘But let my ministers precede me. I shall go in last.’

So the first minister passed through the door and at once found himself in a noble room, and as he looked round he said to himself : ‘Who knows whether I shall be permitted to see God or not? I may be a bastard. And yet this place, so spacious and so beautiful, is a fitting dwelling-place even for the Deity.’ With all his looking and straining, however, he quite failed to see God anywhere. Then said he to himself : ‘If now I go out and declare that I have not seen God, the king and the other minister will throw it in my teeth that I am base-born. I have only one course open, therefore, which is to say that I have seen Him.’

So he went out, and when the king asked, 'Have you seen God?' he answered at once: 'Of course I have seen God.'

'But have you really seen Him?' continued the king.

'Really and truly,' answered the minister.

'And what did He say to you?' inquired the king further.

'God commanded me not to divulge His words,' readily answered the minister.

Then said the king to the other minister: 'Now you go in.'

The second minister lost no time in obeying his master's order, thinking in his heart as he crossed the threshold: 'I wonder if I am base-born?' Finding himself in the midst of the magnificent chamber, he gazed about him on all sides, but failed to see God. Then said he to himself: 'It is very possible I am base-born, for no God can I see. But it would be a lasting disgrace that I should admit it. I had better make out that I also have seen God.'

Accordingly, he returned to the king, who said to him: 'Well, have you seen God?' when the minister asserted that he had not only seen Him, but that he had spoken with Him too.

It was now the turn of the king, and he entered the room confident that he would be similarly favoured. But he gazed around in dismay, perceiving no sign of anything which could even represent the Almighty. Then began he to think to himself: 'This God, wherever He is, has been seen by both my ministers, and it cannot be denied, therefore, that their birthright is clear. Is it possible that I, the king, am a bastard, seeing that no God appears to me? The very thought is confusion, and necessity will compel me to assert that I have seen Him too.'

Having formed this resolution, the king stepped out and joined the rest of his party.

'And now, O king,' asked the cunning girl, 'have you also seen God?'

'Yes,' answered he with assurance, 'I have seen God.'

'Really?' asked she again.

'Certainly,' asserted the king.

Three times the girl asked the same question, and three times the king unblushingly lied. Then said the girl:

'O king, have you never a conscience? How could you possibly see God, seeing that God is a spirit?'

Hearing this reproof, the king recalled to mind the saying of the girl that one day he would lie too, and, with a laugh, he confessed that he had not seen God at all. The two ministers, beginning to feel alarmed, confessed the truth as well. Then said the girl: 'O king, we poor people may tell lies occasionally to save our lives, but what had you to fear? Telling lies, therefore, for many has its own attractions, and to them at least the taste of lying is sweet.'

Far from being offended at the stratagem which the girl had practised on him, the king was so struck with her ingenuity and assurance that he married her forthwith, and in a short time she became his confidential adviser in all his affairs, public as well as private. Thus this simple girl came to great honour and renown, and so much did she grow in wisdom that her fame spread through many lands.



XXIII.

THE MULE AND THE TRAVELLER.

A CERTAIN mule, having a good opinion of himself, began braying pretentiously, so that everyone stopped to say, 'Who is that?' A traveller, passing by at that moment, said to him, 'Oh, sir! pray tell me what was the name of your mother?'

'My mother's name was Mare,' answered the mule, with a louder bray than ever.

'And what was your father's name?' continued the inquisitive traveller.

'Be off!' answered the mule—'be off! None of your insolence, if you please! You are growing a little *too* familiar!'

XXIV.

THE FROG AND THE FARRIER.



A FARRIER was once engaged in shoeing a fine Arab horse at the door of his smithy. Just then a frog came hopping up, and, thrusting out one of his feet with a consequential air, he cried : ' Ho, farrier, shoe me, too !—shoe me, too !'



XXV.

THE ELEPHANT AND HIS KEEPER.

THERE was an elephant which was accustomed to suffer most cruel treatment at the hands of his keeper ; and the keeper, knowing the sagacity of these animals, and being in

fear of his life, used to sleep some little distance from the peg to which the elephant was tied. One night the elephant, taking up a long loose branch, chewed the end of it, in



order to separate the fibres; and having twisted them in the long hair of the sleeping man, he dragged him within reach, and trampled him to death.



XXVI.

THE FOUR WEAVERS.



OUR poor weavers were once sitting together by the wayside, and when a traveller rode by and threw them four pence, intending by his act of charity that each of them should take as his share a single penny, one of the weavers, nimbler than the rest, picked up the whole of the four pieces, and said, 'These pence are for me.' Each of his com-

panions preferred precisely the same claim, saying, as they fell to quarrelling, 'Nay, these pence were for me.'

Just then, a second traveller, coming up, asked, 'What are you four weavers making such an ado for?'

'These four pence were thrown to me,' answered their possessor; and so answered each of the others.

'You stupid people!' said the traveller, 'there are four pence, and four claimants. Why do you not divide the money, and take a penny apiece, instead of falling out over them?'

'I take all or none,' said the man who had secured them.

Then said the second traveller: 'But the person who gave them to you is not yet out of sight. Run after him, and ask him which of you is to have them.'

All the four weavers instantly rose and ran after the first traveller; and when they had overtaken him, they cried in a breath: 'O traveller, say to which of us you gave these four pence!'

The traveller looked at them with amused amazement, and seeing that they were weavers, he answered: 'First, let me know which of you is the wisest man, and then you shall be told for whom I intended the pence.'

The fellow who had grabbed the money cried: 'I am an exceedingly wise man, and if you will listen, I will prove that I am.' He then related the following story:

‘When I was first married, I went one day to my father-in-law’s village to pay him a visit, and to keep me in countenance I took with me as a companion our village barber. While we had still some little part of our journey to perform, the sun went down, and darkness began to set in. You must understand that I am moon-blind, which makes it very difficult for me to distinguish anything after dusk. Well, as we were going along, we approached a great pit full of water ; and as the road seemed black and the water looked white, I naturally imagined that the water must be the road. Full of this idea, I walked straight to the bank, and in another minute I was floundering about up to my neck. When the barber saw this, he said : “ Hullo, friend, where have you gone to ? ”

“ Wait a minute,” answered I ; “ I shall be with you presently.”

‘I said this because I did not wish to appear such a fool as



to have walked into the pond except with a purpose, and I was equally ashamed to confess that I was moon-blind, but I felt anything but comfortable in my desperate struggles to regain the bank. The barber, however, cried out with a loud voice : “ Help, help ! a man has fallen into the water ! ” and three or four men, hearing his cries, rushed to the spot, but before they arrived I managed to scramble out myself. One of the

new-comers then said to me : " How were you so unlucky as to tumble in ?"

" " Oh," answered I, not daring to admit my infirmity of vision, " I didn't tumble in—I jumped in. This barber argued that there was not much water here, so I jumped in to show him the real depth of it."

'The men laughed at the silliness of the barber, and went away, while I waited to wring the water out of my dripping clothes.

'As the barber had gone on ahead, I made haste after him ; but it so happened that as we entered the village all the cattle were coming in from grazing, and, the barber passing down the street close to a bullock, I missed him, nor could I tell which way to turn. In this dilemma I said to myself, " I cannot possibly see my way. I had better take hold of a bullock's tail, and when he reaches his home I'll ask his owner the way to my father-in-law's house." So, seizing a bullock's tail, and holding on to it with a tight grip, I walked patiently along.

'Meanwhile the barber had reached the house, and finding that I had not followed, he turned back to look for me, and was rather astonished to find me holding a bullock's tail.

" " What are you doing with that bullock's tail ?" said he.

'As some villagers were standing within earshot, and I was afraid of being laughed at, I did not mention that I had lost my way, but I began to abuse the barber : " You wretched fellow !" answered I ; " you say this fine bullock is only worth five rupees ! Anyone with half an eye might see he is worth twenty-five at the least."

'This speech must have impressed the villagers, because one of them said, " What a clever weaver !"

'I then followed the barber without further mishap to my father-in-law's, where we were welcomed, and a bedstead was brought forward for us to sit on.

'In the courtyard where the family was assembled there was a young buffalo, which ever and anon came up to the barber and me, and sniffed at us, and sometimes it licked us, besmearing our cheeks with a tongue like a painter's brush, though we remonstrated and tried to keep it away.

'My mother-in-law now brought us out some bread which she had just baked, and having laid it down between us, she said: "Come, eat your bread;" after which she went in for some butter. At this moment the buffalo-calf again approached us, and the barber hunted it back with his stick. He had scarcely sat down again when my mother-in-law arrived with the liquid butter, and began to pour it over the bread. It was very dark, and as for me, I was unable to see the least bit in the world; but hearing the trickling of the butter, and believing it was the buffalo at the food, I gave my mother-in-law so sharp a back-hander that she was sent sprawling on the ground, and all the butter was wasted. Being, for a wonder, a woman of the sweetest temper, she picked herself up without a word of expostulation, and, taking her vessel, went meekly back to the house.

'A few minutes afterwards said the barber to me: "I hope that was not your mother-in-law whom you hit, but I think it was!"

'Having finished eating, I said: "Barber, put this bread aside," and, lying down, we went to sleep.*

'Some hours must have passed, when I was awakened by the clinking of money at some distance, and, imagining there was a robber somewhere, I got up to listen. Then, rising, I tied one end of my long turban to the bed, so that I might be able to guide myself back when I wished to return, and proceeded in the direction of the sound, allowing my turban to glide gradually through my hands. Almost immediately I found myself at the doorway of the court, and, looking out, I stood for a moment with cocked-up ears, listening to every sound. As the chinking was not repeated, I pulled at the turban in order to find my way back, when, as I imagined, the whole piece of stuff came towards me, the fact being that the mischievous buffalo had taken advantage of the occasion to bite my turban in two. "What shall I do now?" thought I. "I shall be found out to a certainty, and everyone will call me the blind man." This thought distressed me exceedingly, since a blind man is an object of

* In the hot weather people bring their light beds out of doors and sleep in the courtyard.

pity and scorn, but, groping here and groping there, I did my best to retrace my steps. Suddenly my shins struck sharply against the edge of a bedstead, and in another instant I was lying prone across my old mother-in-law, whom I nearly crushed, and who, lifting her head, yelled out: "Murder! What wretch are you, coming about here?" I answered her: "Mother dear, when you were giving us the butter, I thought, as it was so dark, that your young buffalo had come to steal the bread, and I hit without looking. But as I am afraid I must have struck you, I have just come over to apologize to you."

'My mother-in-law was pleased, and answered: "Son, go back to bed; I forgive you."

"Nay, mother," said I, "you come as far as my bed with me, just to show that you really forgive me, and that you bear no malice. This kind of forgiveness does not suit me."

'So the good-natured old lady accompanied me back, and I spent the rest of the night undisturbed.

'And now,' continued the weaver, 'did you ever hear of such a clever fellow as I am? And am I not entitled to the four pence?'

The second weaver here interposed, and said: 'It is true you are pretty wise, but I am wiser. O traveller, when you hear the story of my wisdom, I think you will admit that the four pence properly belong to me! When I went to pay the accustomed visit to my father-in-law after my marriage, I determined to travel in style. So I borrowed a horse from one neighbour, arms from another, and jewels from another. Thus mounted, adorned, and accoutred, I set out, and every traveller that passed me stared and said: "What a respectable weaver! What a rich, respectable weaver!" On the road I was caught in a storm of rain, and I had to take shelter at a certain village. When the rain was over I started again, but, owing to the delay, it was so late when I approached the village of my father-in-law that I thought to myself: "If I enter the village now no one will see me, but if I wait till the morning and enter then,

everyone will say : ' What a grand son-in-law that neighbour of ours has managed to get ! ' " This reflection induced me to pull up at the door of a poor fakeer, and to ask him for a night's lodging. " Welcome ! " said the fakeer, and I dismounted and salaamed him. Then said the fakeer : " What business has brought you this way to-day ? "

" " All I wish, " answered I, " is just to rest here for the night. To-morrow I shall continue my journey. "

" " But, " said the fakeer, " it is the custom at this village for travellers first to report themselves to the watchman before resting. "

" " Surely you do not take me for a thief ? " protested I. " All I want is leave merely to sit down and wait. "

" " I don't know, " answered the fakeer ; " there have been thieves about lately, and if you are not careful you will get into trouble. I do not mind allowing you to remain if you will put on my clothes and go round and beg some bread for me. "

" " But I don't know how to beg, " said I. " Pray be so good as to permit me to remain. "

" " Out of my doors ! " cried the fakeer, and he bundled me out into the cold. Then said I : " All right ; if you will allow me to stay, I will go and beg for you. "

' So the fakeer took charge of my clothes and all my other property, and gave me his rags and his begging-bowl and bade me make haste. As I was changing, I said to myself : " I will beg at every house except my father-in-law's. " Scarcely had I gone ten steps, however, when the fakeer cried after me : " Remember, you are to bring scraps from every house in the village, or else in this place you shall not remain. I know the bread of every one of them, so beware ! "

' This was a caution I had not expected, but I made the best of my way into the village in my disguise, and having begged at every other house, I stopped in doubt and perplexity at that of my father-in-law. On the one hand, I was afraid of the fakeer, and on the other I was afraid of discovery. At last the former feeling prevailed, and I entered the courtyard. Now, my father-in law had lately taken up his

store of wheat out of the ground, and the recent heavy rain had filled the empty pit with water. Avoiding the danger, I took up my station in front of the house, and cried: "For God's sake, give me some bread! For God's sake, give me some bread!"—after the usual style and manner of fakeers. It was horribly dark, and the strong wintry wind was so bitterly cold that I felt perished. My mother-in-law, hearing my cries, said to my wife: "Take a little bread out to that poor fakeer." And my wife, lifting some dry sugar-cane to serve her as a torch, lighted it, and with the light in one hand and the cakes in the other she came out into the veranda. The moment I saw her I said to myself: "If I go too near her, she will recognise me;" so as she advanced I stepped backward, and the more she advanced the more diffident I became, until suddenly I fell plump on my back into the pool of the water. Then cried my wife: "Oh, mother, mother, this poor fakeer has fallen into the pit! and he is sinking, he is sinking!" And so great a stir did she make, that my mother-in-law, and my father-in-law, and several of the neighbours, came rushing together and surrounded the pit crying: "What has happened?" Half dead with cold, and shivering in every limb, I was dragged out of the water by my father-in-law, who said, "Oh, fakeer, fakeer, where do you live?" but I was in such a



state that the chattering of my teeth was the only reply of which I was capable. Then said my father-in-law: "This poor fellow will die of cold, and his blood will be on our heads. Light up a fire for him, and let us warm him." This was no sooner said than done, but as I began to revive, the people, by questioning, found me out, and one of them slyly remarked: "This man is very like your son-in-law, neighbour."

"Yes, yes," answered I, gasping; "I am, I am!"

"But what on earth," asked my relations, "happened to you that you had to beg your bread?"

"The truth is," answered I, "I came riding to this village on a mare; and as it was late when I arrived, I put up with a fakeer, living hard by the road. But he was a churl, and he compelled me to take round his bowl for bread before he would lodge me, and that is how I came to find myself here before the morning."

"What a misfortune!" cried my father-in-law. "That fakeer has not been in the village more than a day, and who knows what sort of a character he is! Run, my son, and see whether he is still there, for my mind misgives me."

The son made haste to the hut, but the cunning fakeer had mounted my mare and decamped at a gallop, carrying off all my jewels, my money and my clothes. Then did my mother-in-law most unjustly reproach me with bitter words, "A precious wiseacre for a son-in-law! You would not come straight to the house, lest no one should see and admire you. Does no one see you now, you silly! and when to-morrow comes you will be the gazing-stock of the whole village."

'And now,' continued the second weaver to the traveller, 'this man says he is clever, but is he one half so clever as I am?'

'Verily,' answered the traveller, 'you are clever in right earnest; and you need not be afraid of losing your character.'

Then said the third weaver: "That these two fellows are possessed of wisdom no one can deny. It may be that

I am not quite so wise ; but you, O traveller, shall judge, and if you think me worthy of the four pence, I hope I may receive them."

'On the occasion of my visit to my father-in-law's house, whither my wife had gone before me, the village barber bore me company ; and on our arrival my mother-in-law put out a bedstead for us, and said, "Sit down." Down we sat ; and she then said : "You must be hungry?" The barber answered: "Yes." So she brought a pound of uncooked rice and some brown sugar, and mixing them together, said : "Eat this." Then she sat down to her distaff just in front of us, and began spinning her thread. The barber's whetted appetite waited for no second invitation, and he fell to ; but I was ashamed even to touch the food with my mother-in-law looking on, and I took never a grain of it.



" "This is very nice food," remarked the barber ; "why do you not eat some of it?"

" "I don't feel inclined," answered I.

'My mother-in-law then got up, and said to me: "Son, you are not eating!"

" "No," said I ; "I am not hungry."

'She then looked vexed ; and going to the other women of the house, she said : "I gave the lad some rice, thinking

he would relish it after his long journey, but he will not touch it."

As soon as she had turned her back on us, however, I took advantage of the circumstance to pounce on the rice like a hungry hawk and, taking up a double-handful, I crammed it all into my mouth, intending to eat prodigiously. If she had only remained away a little longer I should have swallowed my mouthful; but, to my great annoyance, she returned at the critical moment, and sat down again at her distaff, looking straight at me all the time. I kept as quiet as a mouse, not daring to move my jaw, while my cheeks were bursting with the quantity of sugar and rice which I had stuffed into my mouth. After looking at me fixedly for some seconds, she said to herself: "This lad was all right a little time ago, when I left him. What has happened to his face to be all swollen up in that way?" Then she rose, and approaching me, she said: "O son, are you ill, or what's the matter, that your face has become swollen so frightfully?" As my mouth was so full, it was not in my power to utter a syllable, and I stared at her mutely. The old woman, now seriously alarmed, began shrieking, "Oh, help! my son-in-law is ill. He is ill—he is dying! See what a dreadful face he has!"

The barber, who was not a very intelligent man, but, if anything, decidedly stupid, said to her: "For goodness' sake don't make such a noise. These are nothing but simple tumours, and I'll cure your son in a jiffy."*

"Oh, if you will only cure him," said she, "of this horrid disorder, I have a couple of milch buffaloes in my house, and the one we intended for my son-in-law I will give to you—you shall have it, you shall indeed, if you will only cure him!"

The barber, taking out his lancet, made a deep gash in each of my cheeks, and immediately the rice and the dissolved sugar began to ooze out.

"You see the blood," said he, "which is oozing out?—and those white things are maggots! If I had not been at

* Barbers in India are also surgeons—barber-surgeons, in fact, as formerly in England.

hand to cure your son, those maggots would have eaten up into his brain and killed him."

'My mother-in-law was profuse in her acknowledgments, and at once presented him with my milch buffalo; but as for me, I lost my buffalo, and had both my cheeks cut open into the bargain.

'And now,' said the third weaver, in conclusion, 'judge whether I am not possessed of extraordinary wisdom over and above these fellows.'

'So great a wiseacre are you,' answered the traveller, 'that in all my life I never met a greater.'

'It must be admitted,' observed the fourth weaver, 'that all these three men are consummately wise; but now hear me, for I venture to think I am wiser than them all.

'When I went to visit my father-in-law, I also invited our village barber to accompany me. We rode on borrowed horses, and my wife was carried in a doolie. When we arrived at the house, we were made heartily welcome, and as an omen of good luck on our happy union, my good father-in-law, according to the usual custom, poured abundance of oil into the stone socket in which turned the lower hinge of the door. Then he gave us seats of honour in the midst of his guests, and called for supper. Now, my mother had given me the strictest orders to be on my good behaviour, and to show my respect and good breeding by eating as little as possible. When, therefore, my friends invited me to the repast, I affected an indifference to food, and said: "I will eat by-and-by." My friend the barber, however, went boldly forward, and as boiled rice was a delicacy we seldom partook of, he proceeded to make a hearty meal. Then said my mother-in-law: "Why do you not eat, son? Come and have your supper."

"I do not feel hungry just now," answered I.

'When the meal was over, the plates were removed, and my portion was put on one side. Then, as it was time for bed, we all retired, my friends to the courtyard and the barber and myself to the house-top.

'After we had lain down, the barber said to me : " Why did you not eat any food ?"

" "I was hungry then," answered I, "but I am more hungry now. Go and ask them to let me have my food here."

" "Let us first see," replied he, "whether there is a hole in the roof."

'We looked and found that there was one large enough for a man to pass through, for it was one of those houses in the roofs of which such holes exist in order that the grain, laid on the roof to dry, may be shovelled back into the little household granary below.

'Then said the barber : "Let us take some of the cording off this bed, and I can lower you down. You will find your food on the shelf."

'Tying the cord round my waist, he lowered me into the chamber beneath, and finding my plate of rice on the top of the corn-bin, I sat there and ate it. When I had finished I said quietly : "Pull me up!" The barber, however, did not pull. Again and again I called to him, "Pull me up!" but without avail. Tired of calling, I sat still where I was.

'Now, it happened that some stranger had arrived at the house just then, and that my mother-in-law had said to my wife : "Go into the house and bring out that plate of rice for him." My wife, therefore, opened the door from without, and began feeling about for the plate. At last her hand touched mine, and she uttered a shriek, crying : "There is an evil spirit in the house! Help!" Then said I to her : "Don't run out, and don't make a noise; you will be heard." But without stopping to consider, she rushed out, and my mother-in-law instantly shut the door and put the chain up.

'The disturbance roused up the barber, who, looking down, said : "What is the matter? Do you wish to come out?" I begged and begged of him to pull me out as quickly as possible. "I will only pull you out," answered he, "on condition that you hand me up a chatty of flour." With this request I at once complied, and he took the vessel of flour and then pulled me up to the roof.

'Meanwhile my father-in-law had sent for the village

priest to exorcise the evil spirit from his house. The priest, arriving, sat by the doorstep, opened his book, and began to recite appropriate verses. Then said he: "Some spirits are white, and some spirits are black. The spirit which has entered your house is a white one, and a tough customer he is likely to prove. How much will you give me if I drive him out for you?"

"Here," said my father-in-law, "are five rupees."

"Good!" replied the priest. "He shall be driven out, but he must be killed as well. Arm yourselves with sticks and stones, and when he makes a rush give it to him well!"

Opening the door, the wily priest now entered the house. But the truth was he knew nothing whatever about evil spirits, and when he caught sight of the bright round disc of light cast by the moon on the floor as it shone through the



hole in the roof, he was struck dumb with fear and astonishment, and remained rooted, half dazed, to the spot. Just then the barber peeped down and saw him, having overheard all that had passed in the yard below. Seizing his vessel full of flour, he emptied the whole of it over the priest, who was just under the hole. Nearly suffocated, and imagining himself pursued by ten thousand furies, the

wretched man rushed for the door, but was set upon the moment he appeared by the party watching outside: "Hold, hold!" cried he; "don't beat me, I am the priest!"

"Nay, you are an evil spirit," answered they; "our priest is not of this colour."

'So they killed him, and cast his body out of the courtyard, and went to sleep. When morning came, however, they saw that he was really the priest, and no evil spirit at all; and they were in a fright, and were brought up to answer for the mishap; nor did my father-in-law escape under a heavy fine.

'And now, sir,' continued the fourth barber, 'do you not agree that I am the wisest of all, seeing that if I had not conducted myself with spirit and independence, and declined my food, none of these wonderful things would have happened?'

'You are all such a rare collection of Solomons,' answered the traveller, 'that though the four pence were intended for equal division among you, you shall now have four pence apiece,' saying which he gave them more money, and continued his journey, leaving the four weavers delighted with the fruits of their wisdom.



XXVII.

THE KING AND HIS DAUGHTERS.

THERE was once a king who had several daughters. To the first he said: 'How do you love me?' 'I love you as sugar,' said she. 'To the next he said: 'And how do you love me?' 'I love you as honey,' said she. To the third he said: 'And how do you love me?' 'I love you as sherbet,' said she. 'To the last and youngest he said: 'And how do you love me?' 'I love you as salt,' said she.

On hearing the answer of his youngest daughter the king frowned, and, as she persisted in repeating it, he drove her out into the forest.

There, when wandering sadly along, she heard the tramping of a horse, and she hid herself in a hollow tree. But the fluttering of her dress betrayed her to the rider, who was a prince, and who instantly fell in love with her and married her.

Some time after, the king, her father, who did not know what had become of her, paid her husband a visit. When he sat down to meat, the princess took care that all the dishes presented to him should be made-up sweets, which he either passed by altogether or merely tasted. He was very hungry, and was longing sorely for something which he could



eat, when the princess sent him a dish of common spinach, seasoned with salt, such as farmers eat, and the king signified his pleasure by eating it with relish.

Then the princess threw off her veil, and, revealing herself to her father, said: 'O my father, I love you as salt. My love may be homely, but it is true, genuine and lasting, and I entreat your forgiveness.'

Then the king perceived how great a mistake he had made, and there followed a full reconciliation.

XXVIII.

THE WIDOW OF BANÉYR.

THERE was a widow of Banéyr who had two sons. They had cut the harvest of their little ancestral field, and their two bullocks were treading out the grain, when suddenly the sky became overcast and a storm of rain swept by. The poor silly woman instantly caught a certain familiar insect, a friend to man, and, running a needle and thread through it, hung it up to a neighbouring bér tree as a charm to drive away the unwelcome shower. At the same time she addressed God in the following words: 'O God, my boys are but children, and in this thing are innocent. But Thou art a white-bearded man. Didst Thou not see that this rain was not wanted for threshing out my wheat?'



XXIX.

THE GARDENER'S WIFE, THE POTTER'S WIFE,
AND THE CAMEL.

A GARDENER'S wife and a potter's wife once hired a camel to carry their goods to market. One side of the beast was well laden with vegetables and the other with pottery. As they went along the road the camel kept stretching back his long neck to pilfer the vegetables. Upon observing this, the potter's wife began laughing, and jested her friend on her ill luck. 'Sister,' said she, 'at the end of the journey there will not be a single vegetable left; you'll have nothing whatever to sell!'

'It is true you are luckier than I am,' answered the gardener's wife, 'but, remember, the first to win are the last to lose!'

When they arrived at the market-place the camel-man

ordered his animal to kneel down, but the weight on one side was so much greater by this time than the weight on the other that the camel gave a lurch as he got on his fore-knees and



crushed the pottery between himself and the earth, so that most of it was smashed, and what was not smashed was cracked. So it ended that the gardener's wife had something, at least, to sell, but the potter's wife had nothing.



XXX.

THE THREE WEAVERS.

THERE were three weavers, all brothers, who lived in the same village. One day the eldest said to the others: 'I am going to buy a milch buffalo.' So he went to a farmer, paid for the buffalo, and took it home.

The second brother was quite touched at the sight of it. He viewed its head, its horns, and its teats, and then said: 'O brother, allow me to be a partner in this beautiful

buffalo.' Said the elder: 'I have paid for this beautiful buffalo twenty-two rupees. If you wish to be a partner in her, you had better go to the farmer and pay him twenty-two rupees, too, and then we shall have equal shares in her.'

Shortly after the third brother came in and said: 'O brother, you have allowed our brother to be a partner with you in this buffalo; won't you let me take a share, too?'

'Willingly,' answered the other; 'but first you must go to the farmer and pay him twenty-two rupees, as we have done.'

So the third brother did so; while the farmer chuckled, saying: 'This is a fine thing, getting all this money for my skinny old buffalo!'

The three brothers now agreed that each one of them should have a day's milk from the buffalo in turn, and that each should bring his own pot. The two elder brothers had their turns; but when the third day came, the youngest said: 'Alas! what shall I do? I have no pot in my house!' In this perplexity the eldest remarked: 'This is a most difficult business, because, you see, if you milk the buffalo without a pot, the milk will be spilt; you had better milk her into your mouth.'

His ingenious solution of the problem was at once adopted, and the youngest brother milked the buffalo into his mouth.

Going home, he was met by his wife, who asked: 'Well, where is the milk?'

'I had no pot,' answered the man, 'so I had to milk the buffalo into my mouth.'

'Oh, you did, did you?' cried she; 'and so your wife counts as no one? I am to have no milk? If I am not to have my share, in this house I refuse to remain.' And she went off in anger to the house of her mother.

Then the three brothers went together to the head-man of the village and complained, begging him to order the woman to return to her husband.

So the head-man summoned her and said: 'O woman, you may have your share of the milk, too, just the same as your husband. Let him visit the buffalo in the morning and drink the milk, and do you visit her in the evening.'

'Then why,' said she, 'could not my husband have said so? Now it is all right; and, besides, I shall be saved all the trouble of setting the milk for butter.' And she returned to her husband's house immensely satisfied.



XXXI.

THE WEAVER'S MISTAKE.

ONCE upon a time a certain weaver, who owned a little ancestral field which he had no time to reap, wove a piece of cloth, and taking it to the village blacksmith, he said: 'Here, friend, accept this gift, and make a sickle that shall cut my corn of itself.'

When the blacksmith had finished the work, the delighted weaver took the sickle and laid it quietly at the edge of the ripe corn, saying: 'O sickle, mow my field!' Then he went home, but in the evening he returned, for he said: 'Perhaps the job is done; so let me now go and see how much of my harvest my new sickle has mown.' When he arrived at the spot he found the corn undisturbed, and the sickle lying idly by. But, taking it in his hand, he perceived that it was exceedingly hot, since the sun had been playing on it the whole day, and he said to himself: 'My crop would have been all cut down; but, alas! my sickle has fever.'

So he went to the blacksmith and said: 'My sickle has done no work because fever is heavy upon it, and so I crave some medicine.'

'Take a long string,' answered the ready smith, 'and having tied your sickle to the end of it, dip it into the well, and the fever will leave it.' Then the weaver did as he was bidden, and the sickle recovered and became cool, and he took it home with him and joyously hung it up.

Now, it happened that very night that the weaver's old

mother fell ill of a violent fever, and that the heat of her body was such that she kept tossing about and was like to die. So her sagacious son, saying to himself, 'Aha, I know the medicine!' immediately carried her out to the well, and having tied a rope round her neck, he lowered her in, plunging her repeatedly into the cold water until she really breathed her last. Then he drew her forth, and said: 'Now my old mother's fever has left her!' So he bore her home, and put her sitting up in a corner of the chamber before a spinning-wheel, saying: 'Now my dear old mother is going to spin.' There he left her, going himself out to his work. And when he returned in the evening he looked at her, and her mouth hung open, and her teeth protruded, and great brown ants were crawling about her gums. So the weaver said: 'My clever old mother is eating oil-seeds (thil), and laughing away like anything.' And with this he began to laugh, too, and he laughed and laughed so heartily that he brought all his neighbours together, who, seeing his error, reproved him, saying: 'O foolish one, your mother is not laughing, but dead!' And having so spoken they carried her forth and buried her.



XXXII.

THE DELUDED WEAVERS.



It was long ago, when the Duranis had subdued the country, that there was a certain small village inhabited only by weavers. As the Duranis spoke in Persian, and the weavers only knew Panjábi, it happened that, when the new officers appeared to collect the revenue, the poor villagers were unable to explain their grievances, but had perforce to sit still and submit to all the exactions

possible. Then the weavers summoned a meeting of their people, and agreed that they would all put ten rupees each into a common stock for the purpose of despatching two of their number to Kabul to purchase a supply of the language of Persia. This was no sooner said than done, and two old gray-beards from among their tribe, whose wisdom had become the common admiration, set out on the long journey past Peshawur and through the dark Khyber Pass to obtain the coveted gift. At every village they made the anxious inquiry: 'Have you any Persian for sale?' and from every village, because they were seen to be weavers, they were hooted away, or passed contemptuously by. They had arrived at the town of Jelálábád, and were about to enter the gates, when they met a man who was both clever and cruel. 'We would buy some Persian for our village,' said the poor weavers. Then said the man to himself: 'These fellows are great fools, but let me see if I cannot please them and secure their money too.' So he answered them: 'Here, come with me, and hand me over a fair price, and I will provide you with two jars full of the most excellent Persian.' So he took them home for the night and gave them some supper.

Now, it happened that it was the time of year when wasps have their nests hanging from the beams, so this wretched man put sweet-stuffs into a couple of jars and then filled the jars with black wasps, and, having tied them down, he sold them to the travellers, saying: 'Be careful not to open these jars on the way, lest the Persian escape; but keep them safely sealed, and when you arrive home call your friends together on a Thursday, and, entering all together into a dark chamber, close the doors, undress your bodies, and then, opening the jars, let every man among you take his share and be satisfied.'

These foolish men then left for India, and having arrived at their own village, they called their neighbours together and told them the good news. So they all hastened into a dark chamber, and, when they had closed every aperture, they divested themselves of their shirts and opened the jars. The imprisoned wasps flew instantly forth, and stung them severely, while, groping here and there from their attacks,

the deluded weavers kept crying: 'Where is the door? Where is the door?' At last the door was found, and an escape was made into the open air, but when they looked at each other in the light of day, scarcely could they recognise each other by reason of their swollen features. One of them, having missed his mother, who had been one of the party, cried to some bystanders: 'Has no one seen my mother?' 'Your mother,' answered they, 'has run away, and with her quantities of Persian, which was sticking to her fast.' So, searching high and low, they found the poor old thing, but she was all swollen, and she became ill and took to her bed.

After this sad experience the weavers of the village determined never more to meddle with Persian, but to leave that tongue for those who were cunning to master strange languages.



XXXIII.

THE KING AND THE FARMER.



ONE day a certain king, having called his ministers about him, mounted his horse and rode out into the fields. There he halted before an old farmer, who, though bowed with the weight of many years, was toiling in the furrows. So he beckoned to him to rein in his oxen, and said to him: 'Old man, why, in God's name, did you not do it?' And the old man answered: 'Sir, I did it; but it was not God's will.' Then said the king the second time: 'Why did you not do it?' and the man answered as before.

And the third time the king repeated the same question, and the old man answered to the like intent.

Then the king, continuing the conversation, said: 'And

who in the world is it, with whom you country folk do your business?' And the old man answered: 'With the king himself.'

'But if no king comes,' asked the monarch, 'what then do you do?'

'We trust to the favour of the king's prime minister,' answered the man.

'And if there is no minister?' said the king.

'We then depend on the prince,' answered the man, 'if the prince be worthy.'

The king then turned his horse's head towards the city, saying to the old man: 'Someone may come to you desiring vehemently to know the meaning of this our conversation, but my will is that you do not tell the secret under a heavy sum.'

With these words the king rode home, and, calling his vizier, he said to him: 'You heard my conversation with the old ploughman, and you heard the nature of his replies. Now tell me the interpretation thereof.'

And the vizier was confounded, notwithstanding his reputed wisdom, and he said: 'O king, I know well the words which were spoken, but I know not the meaning of them.'

So the king said to his minister: 'Under penalty of a heavy fine, and of dismissal from your office, you will bring me the meaning within twenty-four hours.'

Then the vizier went sadly away, but as he approached his house the thought occurred to him that he would visit the old husbandman. So he took with him heaps of money and sought him out, and said: 'O father, tell me the mystery of the words which passed between you and the king.' And the old man answered: 'Not under three thousand rupees dare I divulge the secret.' So the minister counted out the money, and gave it into his hand, three thousand rupees all told, in bright silver coins. Having received the money, the old man explained thus:

'When the king asked me, "Why did you not do it?" he meant, "Why did you not marry in your youth, for then you would have had sons to plough for you, and you would never

have been compelled to plough yourself now in the time of old age." My reply was: "I did marry, but it was not the will of God that sons should come to me." The king by his second question meant, "Why did you not marry a second wife?" and my answer was, "I did so marry, but again it was not the will of God that sons should be born." And the king's third question was, "Why did you not marry the third time?" and my reply was to the same tenor as before. After this the king asked me, "With whom do you have dealings, you people of the soil?" and my answer was, "With the king," for with us the king of all the year is the month of July, when the rain comes in abundance, and our fields are well watered, and the earth is loosened, and our seed germinates and shoots forth. Then said the king, "But if there is no king, what then?" and my answer was, "If July is in drought, then we trust to August," which, as being the next best month for the farmer, is like the king's minister; and when the king, continuing, asked me, "But if there is no minister?" I answered, "We trust then to the young prince," which is the month of September, when we sow the crops that are to ripen in spring. This is the explanation of the words.'

So the minister went away satisfied, wondering at the wisdom of the old man who could interpret the dark sayings of the king, and at the wisdom of his master in divining the hearts of his subjects.



XXXIV.

THE WEAVER AND THE PROPHECY.

A VILLAGE weaver went out to cut firewood. Climbing a tree, he perched upon one of the branches, which he began to hew off close to the trunk. 'My friend,' said a traveller passing below, 'you are sitting on the very limb which you are cutting off; in a few minutes you and it will both fall to the ground.' The weaver unconcernedly continued his task, and soon both the branch and himself fell to the foot of the tree, as the traveller had foretold. Limping after him, the weaver cried: 'Sir, you are God! you are God, sir! you are God! What you prophesied has come to pass.'

'Tut, man, tut!' answered the traveller. 'I am not God.'

'Nay, but you are,' replied the weaver; 'and now pray, O pray, tell me when I am to die!'

To be rid of his importunity, the traveller answered: 'You will die on the day on which your mouth begins to bleed,' and he pursued his way.

Some days had elapsed, when the weaver happened to be making some scarlet cloth, and as he had frequently to separate the



threads with his mouth, a piece of the coloured fibre by chance stuck in one of his front teeth. Catching sight of this in a glass, and instantly concluding that it was blood, and that his last hour was at hand, he entered his hut and said : ' Wife, wife, I am sick ! in a few minutes I shall be dead ; let me lie down, and go, dig my grave ! ' So he lay down on his bed, and, turning his face to the wall, closed his eyes, and began deliberately to die. And, indeed, such is the power of the imagination among these people, that he would have died without doubt if a customer had not called for his clothes. He, seeing the man's condition, and hearing of the prophecy, asked to examine his mouth. ' Ah,' said he, ' what an idiot are you ! Call you this blood ? ' and, taking out the thread, he held it before the weaver's eyes.

The weaver, as a man reprieved from death, was overjoyed, and, springing to his feet, resumed his work, having been rescued, as he imagined, from the very jaws of death.



XXXV.

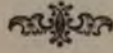
THE BANEYRWAL AND HIS DROWNED WIFE.*

THERE was once a sudden flood in the Indus which washed away numbers of people, and among others the wife of a certain Baneyrwal. The distracted husband was wandering along the banks of the river looking for the dead body, when a countryman accosted him thus : ' O friend, if, as I am informed, your wife has been carried away in the flood, she must have floated down the stream with the rest of the poor creatures. Yet you are going up the stream.'

' Ah, sir,' answered the wretched Baneyrwal, ' you did not know that wife of mine. She always took an opposite

* Baneyrwal—a Baneyr-walla—a Baneyr-fellow—an inhabitant of Baneyr.

course to everyone else. And even now that she is drowned I know full well that, if other bodies have floated down the river, hers *must* have floated up.'



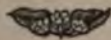
XXXVI.

THE PRETENTIOUS FROG.

A CERTAIN frog, after several ineffectual attempts, managed to climb to the top of a clod of earth close to the puddle in which he was spawned. 'Ah!' cried he, casting one eye



at some cattle which were grazing near, in the hope that they would burst with envy, 'what a grand sight have I! I see Cashmere! I see Cashmere!'



XXXVII.

THE ADVENTURES OF ULPHOO AND
SHURPHOO.

HERE was once a farmer who had two wives, one of whom was wise and the other foolish: The son of the wise wife was named Ulphoo, and the son of the foolish one was named Shurphoo. The foolish woman was of a disposition so perverse, suspicious, and contradictory that she invariably followed a course exactly opposite to that

which was recommended to her; and this trait in her character soon became known to her sister-wife, who, if she desired at any time a favour from her, requested her, above all things, not to grant it.

One day the wise wife fell ill, and perceiving that her end was approaching, she sent for her rival, and thus addressed her: 'Come close to me and hear my last words. I am very ill, and like to die, so I have sent for you to give you some advice before I go. You know what my son is, and what he requires. When I am no more, send him daily to the plough, and let him labour, and feed him with hard fare. With your own son you should deal differently, and I recommend you to send him every day to the school, where he may learn, and remember to clothe him cleanly and to feed him well.'

The foolish wife answered her: 'Very well, your wishes I shall attend to;' and very soon after her rival breathed her last, and was buried in the little cemetery close by the tomb of the village saint.

The foolish woman then began to consider her dying words. 'I see,' said she, 'she wanted my son to be sent to school, and her own son to be at large over the farm doing the work of the fields. Exactly! she would like my son to

get a good thrashing from the surly priest every day of his life, while her own escaped free. Very likely! but I shall do no such thing.'

So she called the two boys, and said to them: 'You, Ulphoo, from this day forward are to attend school and learn your lessons; but my son Shurphoo shall go to the field and do the work of the farm.'

Shurphoo was not sorry to escape the rod, nor did he complain that his food consisted only of cakes made with water, for that had been ever his accustomed fare. On the other hand, Ulphoo, who was of a serious turn, had no

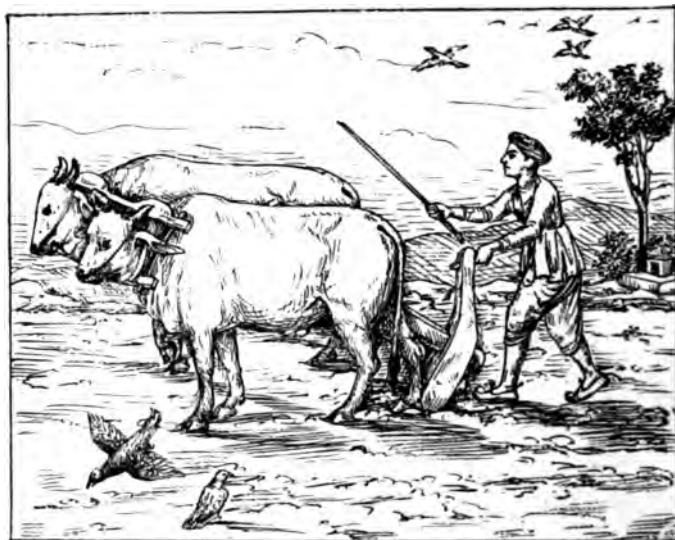


reason to complain that he had to go to the mosque day by day and learn reading, writing, and arithmetic, especially as his cakes were made up with sugar and butter, and as his clothing was always clean and respectable. Thus the two lads spent their days, until, in a short time, Ulphoo had so far progressed in knowledge that he was employed to collect the revenue of his district, while Shurphoo grew more and more awkward and stupid.

One day it happened that Shurphoo broke his plough, so he threw the broken pieces over his shoulder and carried

them into the village to be mended by the village carpenter, with whom he left them. After this he said to himself: 'It must be near dinner-time; I shall now go home.'

For once he was at home before his brother, who had generally come and gone before he appeared. The cakes for both brothers were standing in a pile in a wooden platter, and as he squatted down beside them, he said: 'Mother, let me eat my bread and get back to the field, or else the bullocks may stray and get lost.'



'Your bread is ready,' said she, 'and so is Ulphoo's. Your cakes are those at the top, and in the other dish you will find some onions. Eat, son, but do not touch the cakes of your brother.'

But when Shurphoo saw how rich and dainty was the food provided for Ulphoo, he naturally murmured against his mother's partiality. 'Here am I working hard,' said he, 'and see what poor food I get, while Ulphoo, who does nothing but sit at the huzra,* has sugar and butter.' So he laid his own cakes aside, and ate Ulphoo's. Then said he: 'Mother, I am going to the huzra—I can do collector's

* Hûzra—the general guest-house at a village.

work as well as Ulphoo; let him go to the field—I plough no more.'

When Ulphoo came in, his mother said to him: 'O my son, my other son came in and has eaten your dinner. He has left the plough with the carpenter, and the bullocks he has left in the field; and he says you will be able to do his work for the future. But you are hungry, so I'll send the servant to the field to-day, and make you some more cakes, and to-morrow you can begin the work of the farm.'

'Not at all, mother,' answered Ulphoo. 'My brother may do my work if he pleases, and I will do his. But you need not send the servant, because I am ready to go at once.'

Without another word the lad set out, and receiving the plough from the carpenter, he made his way to the field, where he yoked on the two bullocks, ploughed for the rest of the day, and in the evening returned home.



Meanwhile the silly Shurphoo had gone to the huzra and taken a seat there. He had not even changed his clothes, but dirty as he was, and with his rough blanket on him, he appeared in the meeting place at an hour when all good farmers were hard at work in their fields. By-and-by one of the officers of the Government treasury arrived with a

man carrying a load, and addressing the village watchman, whose post of duty is always the huzra, he said : 'Give me a fresh man to carry this load on to the next village.' The watchman looked for one in vain. 'Everyone is out in the fields at work,' said he. Upon hearing this, the officer, who had no knowledge of Shurphoo, replied : 'But here is a man—why not give me him?'

'Me?' cried Shurphoo; 'but I am one of the village landlords!'

'Ha, ha !' laughed the officer, 'you look like one !'

Saying this, he gave poor Shurphoo two blows with his stick, and compelled him to carry the load, not only to the next village, but to the village beyond as well, for the treasury was distant several stages.

In the evening the wretched Shurphoo, aching in every limb, came back to the house.

'Hullo !' cried Ulphoo, 'where have you been ? You are late—what became of you ?'

'Oh !' answered Shurphoo, 'I was sitting at the huzra, when a fellow came up and beat me with a stick, and forced me to carry a heavy load about ten miles.'

'How unlucky !' replied Ulphoo. 'Never mind ; to-morrow you will be more fortunate. See, this is the revenue which I have been collecting for the Government. As you are now to be responsible for my work, you will have to set out with this money to-morrow, and hand it over to the Tahsildár.' And so saying he counted over into his brother's hands the full amount.

In the morning Shurphoo rose early, and taking some dry flour for his journey, he deposited in the same napkin with the flour the rupees which he had received from Ulphoo. He then put the burden on his head and started for the Tahseel.* About mid-day he arrived at a certain village, and going to the house of a baker, he said to the woman : 'Mother, bake this flour for me.' Taking the flour, she remarked its weight, and inquired : 'Is this flour of yours sifted or unsifted ?'

* Tahsíl—the district court-house and Government treasury. Tahsildár—the native magistrate in charge.

'Sifted or not sifted,' answered he, 'I want it baked. Sift it if you like; if not, cook it as it is.'

The woman then took the flour away and baked it into tasty cakes, which he enjoyed, after which she gave him a bed to sit down upon, and a hookah to smoke, and entertained him with every civility.

In the morning Shurphoo bethought him of the money, and exclaimed: 'Here, you! my money was all in that flour I gave you. Give it up!'

'Did I not ask you,' answered the woman, 'if your flour was sifted or not sifted? However, I have your money safe enough. But until you tell me two stories this way, and two stories that way, not a single piece shall you have.'

This she said only to try him, and to discover if he was a man of mettle or merely a fool. Poor Shurphoo was quite



confounded. 'But I don't know any stories at all,' said he. Then he thought to himself: 'What am I to do? This money is lost to me. Well, at any rate, I'll go and have a look at the Tahseel at least; I am not going to turn back now.' So he continued his journey penniless as he was, and went on to see the Tahseel.

As he was walking along he came to a well or pool of water, at the edge of which grew a fine melon-plant, and Shurphoo noticed that some of the melons were floating on



the surface of the water. So he said: 'I'll tell the officers at the Tahseel that I saw melons growing in a well, and that will astonish them.'

Having rested and drunk, he went on once more, and presently he saw a deer in a thicket scratching his ear with one of his hind-feet. Just at that moment a hunter, who had been in pursuit, fired his matchlock, and the ball pierced both the foot and the ear, and struck one of the animal's horns. 'Ah!' cried Shurphoo, with a long breath; 'here's a wonderful thing. I'll go and tell the officers at the Tahseel that I saw a bullet pierce a deer's foot, then his ear, and then his horn! This will astonish them still more.'

Some distance further on there was a snug nook under the roots of a thorny tree in which a bitch had laid her pups. One of the pups had crawled out into the open, and a kite had swooped down and carried it off. As Shurphoo came to the spot he heard the yelping of the creature, far above his head, but knew not how to explain it. 'Ho, ho!' said he, 'here's another wonder! I'll go and tell the officers at the

Tahseel I heard dogs barking in the air, and that either God keeps them, or else there is some country or other overhead. This will astonish them most of all.'

On reaching the Tahseel, he entered the quadrangle, and going into the office, where the Tahseeldar was busy with some clients, he cried: 'I have a petition, I have a petition!'

'Well,' said the officer, 'what is your petition?'

'I wish it to be written down that I saw melons growing out of a well,' said Shurphoo.

'Who is this madman?' asked the Tahseeldar, and at a signal the servants hunted him out of the place.

Shurphoo, abashed, but by no means disheartened, now thought to himself: 'One thing I have told, and two others remain. Angry or not angry, they shall listen.' So he returned and cried out: 'Another petition, another petition!'

'Tell it quickly, and be off,' said the Tahseeldar.

'Let it be recorded,' said Shurphoo, 'that I am the man



who saw a single bullet shot from a gun which wounded a deer in the foot, the ear, and the horn.'

On hearing this nonsense, the Tahseeldar fell into a rage and ordered his attendants to seize unhappy Shurphoo by

the shoulders and to thrust him out, which accordingly they did, adding abuse to their violence and saying, as they drove him away: 'Take care you do not venture back here again!'

Shurphoo, however, notwithstanding his evil treatment, determined that the third wonder should not be lost to the world for the want of telling. So he had the temerity to appear before the Tahseeldar once more, crying as on the former occasion: 'Another petition, another petition!'

'Wretched idiot,' said the Tahseeldar, 'if you have a petition why cannot you state what your petition is, and have done with it once for all?'

'I am the man,' answered the undaunted Shurphoo, 'who heard dogs barking in the sky!'



'Give the fellow a beating,' said the Tahseeldar, 'and beat him well, that he may trouble me no more.'

The attendants needed no second bidding, but arming themselves with their slippers, they thrashed the unfortunate petitioner within an inch of his life and cast him out with ignominy.

Shurphoo now decided to return to his own village. When, after a weary journey, he appeared at the door, his

brother accosted him, and said : 'Shurphoo, have you paid in the revenue ?'

'No, indeed,' answered Shurphoo; 'I put the money among my flour for safety, but the baker's wife at such-and-such a village refused to return it unless I told her two stories this way, and two stories that way, so I had to go on without it, and on my way I saw melons growing in a well, and I saw a man who wounded a deer in the foot, the ear, and the horn at one shot, and I heard dogs barking in the sky; and I told these wonderful things to the Tahseeldar and all his men, but they beat me and drove me away.'

When Ulphoo had heard this statement a smile stole over his face. 'So, so,' said he, 'you will be the lumbardár, eh, and I am to be the husbandman? Look here! one of the bullocks has fallen ill. Take this money in the morning and go buy another, and I'll try my luck with the baker's wife. Perhaps I shall be able to tell her two stories this way, and two stories that way.'

Before starting, Ulphoo bought a large number of common brass finger-rings and secreted them in the bag of flour which was to serve him for the journey. Arriving at the house of the baker, he addressed the woman, and begged that she would bake some cakes for him.

'Has your flour been sifted, or not sifted?' asked she.

'I know not,' answered Ulphoo; 'but you may sift it if you think proper.'

As she was sifting she caught sight of the rings, and perceiving that Ulphoo's eye was upon her, she remarked: 'There are some gold rings in it.'

'Yes,' answered Ulphoo, 'there are lots of those rings in a bush by the roadside. I picked just a few as I passed, and put them among the flour for safety.'

'But whereabouts is the bush?' she inquired anxiously.

Ulphoo mentioned the spot, and in a few minutes she suddenly observed: 'I have a little work to do now, and I must leave you, but I will return and finish the cakes for you in a short time.' So she started off, running as soon as she had reached the path, to look for the wonderful bush which bore rings.

During her absence her husband came in, and, missing his wife, he said : ' O guest, my wife was here a few minutes ago ; where has she gone to ?'

' I don't know,' answered Ulphoo. ' A strange man came by just now and looked in. He passed the door twice and made signs, and your wife went out and followed him.'

The husband was laden with a couple of bundles of wood, and hearing this news, he threw them down, and, taking up the bamboo-stick on which they had been suspended from his shoulders, he strode out of the house to look for his missing wife. He soon found her returning quickly from her



fruitless search after the rings, and when he met her he said : ' Where have you been ?'

' I have had some work to do,' answered she.

' But,' said he, ' the man who made signs to you—where is he ?'

' I saw no man,' protested she, ' nor did any man make signs to me.'

Not believing her, he lifted his bamboo and thrashed her soundly, after which they sulkily returned to the house together.

Meanwhile Ulphoo, who had noticed the baker's little

girl playing in the enclosure, had slipped out of the house and had met one or two of the villagers. 'What is the name of the village,' asked he, 'where the lad lives to whom the baker's little daughter is betrothed?'

'The village of Jubbi,' answered one, 'four miles distant.'

'That will do,' said he; and he had returned and was sitting quietly in the house when the baker and his wife entered, and when the latter, still crying from the effects of her chastisement, resumed her baking.

In the morning he rose up early and went to the huzra, where he happened to meet a traveller who was going to that very village of Jubbi. Having ingratiated himself with him, he said: 'When you get home, go to the house of the lad to whom this baker's daughter is engaged, and do not forget to tell his friends that his little betrothed was sent to the stack to bring some dried cow-dung for the fire, and that most unfortunately a snake leaped out and bit her, and that she is dead. And say, too, that he and his friends are to come here quickly to show their sympathy with the family.'

After this Ulphoo went back to the house and said to the baker's wife: 'Do you not know that the lad to whom you have betrothed your daughter is dead? He was sent out yesterday to gather sticks, and some wolves set on him and tore him up.'

'But where did you hear of all this?' asked the astonished woman.

'Oh!' returned Ulphoo, 'I met a traveller just now who was going along the road in the greatest haste to give this news to other relations elsewhere, and he asked me to let you know.'

When the wife of the bread-seller heard these doleful tidings, she at once started forth for Jubbi. But by this time the former news had also reached Jubbi, and the other woman was also at that very moment leaving her house for the purpose of demanding an explanation from the mother of her son's betrothed. Half-way between the villages the two women met, and she of Jubbi at once began abusing her friend in unmeasured terms. 'You horrid hag!' cried she, 'why did you send my little daughter-in-law to the dung-hill for fuel in order to be bitten by a snake?'

'Hold your abominable lying tongue!' retorted the other, 'and tell me what devil bade you turn out my daughter's betrothed among wolves?'

And with these words the two indignant mothers fell on each other fist and claw, and fought like furies; while scraps of clothing and wisps of hair lying about attested the violence of their rage. At last, wearied with the struggle, they both sat down for breath, when the woman of Jubbi suddenly said: 'But my son is alive and well, thank God!' to which the other replied: 'And my daughter is also alive and well.'



Then came explanations, and the end of it all was that the two antagonists composed their differences, took some food together, embraced each other tenderly, and parted for their respective homes.

When the baker's wife arrived at her house, she flew at Ulphoo and said: 'So it is you who have been causing all this trouble and bother to me!'

'I have not done anything, mother,' answered he quietly, 'so very wrong. I have merely told you two stories this way. But if you do not give me up the rupees my foolish

brother left with you, I shall have to tell you two stories that way!

The woman, hearing this, began to feel afraid, and going in, she brought out the money, which she handed to him; and glad was she to see her visitor's back.

Ulphoo now hastened on to the Tahseel to pay in the sum which he had recovered. The Tahseeldár, who had been wondering that the money had not been brought before, received him kindly, and in the course of conversation remarked: 'I am told that it was a brother of yours who came here the other day. If so, he was a very stupid fellow.'

'Yes,' answered Ulphoo; 'his mother is stupid, and so also is he.'

'He told me,' said the Tahseeldár, laughing, 'that he had seen pumpkins growing out of a well. Just think of that!'

'And why not?' replied Ulphoo. 'The pumpkins might easily have been resting in the water. But my brother, not being clever, had omitted to observe that the plant was really growing at the edge of the water.'

'But,' said the Tahseeldár, 'he also told me he had seen a stag wounded in the ear, the heel, and the horn, and I know not where, with a single bullet.'

'Even that may be true,' answered Ulphoo; 'but he did not understand the thing. I presume the deer was lying in a particular position, or scratching his ear, or something.'

'Possibly,' said the Tahseeldár; 'but you cannot so easily explain his saying that he had heard dogs barking in the sky.'

'Why not?' answered the brother. 'Are there not vultures and kites about in abundance, and do they not sometimes pounce down upon puppies? But my brother, you see, is not very clever, like you and me, and could not explain himself.'

After paying in the money, Ulphoo returned to his own village. Entering the house, he said to Shurphoo: 'Where is the bullock I sent you for?'

'I looked for a bullock all over the country,' answered Shurphoo; 'and as I could not find one, I bought a buffalo

instead. As I was passing through a certain village, some fellows cried out: "Hi! sir, where did you bring that fighting ram from?" As the whole of them averred that my buffalo was a fighting ram, I left it with them, for I thought to myself: "My brother was angry with me before, because I failed to pay in the revenue, and now, if I take him this buffalo, and it turns out to be a fighting ram, he will be still more angry."

Ulphoo was unable to restrain his impatience when he heard of this extraordinary loss, and he addressed such bitter words to his brother that the latter left the house and took himself off altogether.

Poor Shurphoo now determined to seek his fortune elsewhere, and he went forth he cared not whither. On and on he travelled, and after a long journey he came to a village, and rested for the night at the huzra. He there heard of a certain mogul who lived in those parts, and who owned all the country round. 'He will employ you,' said the watchman; 'he never refuses a poor beggar anything.'

The next day Shurphoo walked up boldly to the mogul's door and offered his services.

'Work you shall have,' answered the great man solemnly, 'but I have a playful fancy which I always indulge when engaging a new servant. If you will agree to the condition, well; if not, begone.'

'I agree to anything and everything,' said the hungry man.

'Be it so,' replied the mogul. 'My stipulation is this: if my servant gets angry I pull out his eye, and if I get angry he pulls out my eye. Besides this, your daily quota of work must be performed. It is not very much. You have only to plough six acres of land every day, to fence it with brushwood, to bring in game for my table, grass for my mare, and firewood for my house; and you are also to cook my food.'

In the morning Shurphoo drove his bullocks afield, and began to plough the stony hillside. Mid-day came, and he had not finished half an acre. Becoming very tired, he let the bullocks go, and, quite unmindful of ploughing and

fencing and hunting and grass-cutting, he lay down and slept under the shade of a tree. After a time a one-eyed slave-girl brought out some bread to him. It was tied up with several tight knots in a bit of calico, and she said to the man: 'My mistress bids me tell you that you are to take out your bread from this cloth without unloosing the knots.'

'If I am not to loose the knots,' cried he, 'how am I to get out the bread?' and he gave the parcel back to her, saying: 'Take it away, take it away!' So the slave-girl took the bread back again to the house.



When evening came he drove home the bullocks, but took no game, no grass, and no wood. As he was tying up the animals for the night, out came the mogul, and asked him: 'Have you ploughed the six acres of ground?'

'No,' answered he.

'Have you brought in some game?'

'No,' answered he a second time.

'Grass for my mare?'

'No,' once more said the man.

'Firewood for my house?'

'No, I have not,' replied again the deluded Shurphoo, warming up.

'What!' cried the mogul; 'you lazy rascal, have you done no work at all?'

'How can I do all that work,' answered Shurphoo, 'when I am all alone?' and he began uttering imprecations.

'But the stipulation?' said his master. 'I made a stipulation, and you are angry, are you not?'

'And why shouldn't I be angry?' said Shurphoo.

'If you are angry, give up your eye,' returned the Moghul, and with this he seized poor Shurphoo, threw him on to the ground, plucked out his eye, and sent him about his business.

Shurphoo now set his face towards his own home once



more. 'I have had enough of playing the gentleman,' said he; 'I will go back to my father's fields, where I was happy, and never leave them again.' As he entered the house, Ulphoo looked at him, and saw that he had lost an eye.

'How did you come to lose your eye?' asked he.

'I went to work as a servant to a mogul,' answered Shurphoo; and then he related his adventures, and the cruelty of his master in depriving him of an eye.

'But,' remarked Ulphoo, 'you were going to be a lum-bardár. Is this all you have been doing?'

'I made a mistake,' answered Shurphoo; 'forgive me, and

now I will be a servant to you, if you will but allow me food and clothing.'

'Very well,' said Ulphoo, 'you carry on the work of the farm for our mother. As for me, I have other work; and first I must visit the village where you were robbed of your buffalo.'

So he handed over charge of the place to his brother, and prepared for his journey. First he bought a sleek young mule and furnished it with gay trappings. Then he engaged a fine servant to attend on him, giving him certain directions which he was to carry out exactly. When all was ready, and he himself had put on his best clothes, he set out and came to the village of the robbers, where he took a seat in the huzra, and all the robbers came about him and received him with great respect. They also gave him refreshments, and lodged him well, and on account of his appearance took trouble to oblige him.

In the morning, when the place was crowded in the usual way, Ulphoo called his servant and said to him: 'Go and do your business!' and the robbers observed that, as the servant removed and broke up the mule's dung, he took therefrom numbers of rupees. This astonished them, and they began to plot among themselves how they should obtain possession of so valuable an animal.

The next morning the servant went through the same performance; for in truth, in accordance with his directions, he had put the rupees there himself overnight. But the robbers knew nothing of the matter, and they said one to another: 'An animal like this we should persuade our guest to part with.' So one of them asked Ulphoo: 'Sir, will you take the price of this mule and sell it to us?'

'I will not sell her,' answered he.

'Nay,' said they; 'take, if you like, four thousand rupees and let us have her.'

'No, no,' again answered Ulphoo. 'This mule is my kingdom, and pays me tribute every day; whereas if I accepted ever so large a sum for her I should soon spend that, and then I should have nothing.'

Seeing they could not prevail on him to sell, they brought

some of the most respectable men of the country, and at last Ulphoo was persuaded to part with his mule for four thousand rupees, and having received them he returned towards his own village.

On the way to his house he passed a certain bazaar, where, seeing two live hares exposed for sale, he bought them both, and took them with him. These he tied up in his house, and then rested for the night.

The next morning he gave one of the hares into his wife's charge, saying to her: 'I expect three or four strange men will come here seeking for me to-day;' and he gave her the most careful instructions how she was to act with regard to



the hare and to the visitors. Then he took the other hare, and on leaving the house he said: 'Tell them they will find me at the well in the field.' Meanwhile, she began preparing dinner for six.

Now, when the robbers discovered, as they soon did, that the wonderful mule declined to produce rupees for them, they were indignant, and four of them banded themselves to set out and seek for Ulphoo. 'Whenever we find him,' said they, 'let us kill him.' When they arrived at his house, and had inquired after him, his wife said: 'He has gone to the

well;' and as soon as they had turned their backs she brought the hare, which had been left in her charge, out of the house, tied it at the door, and went on with her cooking.

Ulphoo was seated on a bedstead by the well, and when he saw the robbers approaching he rose up, received them politely, gave them seats, and offered them a hookah. Then, while engaging them in conversation, he took out his hare, gave it two slaps, and said to it: 'Go and tell my wife to prepare supper for six.' The hare immediately scampered off, and by-and-by it escaped unseen into a field of sugar-cane. The robbers were amazed at Ulphoo's proceedings, and said among themselves: 'Let us not kill him now; let us first see what will come of this.'

After a time Ulphoo invited the four men to come and sup with him, and they accompanied him home, where they were still more amazed to see the very same hare, as they supposed it to be, tied up at the door. Then they said to each other: 'This hare must be a very good sort of animal to have; let us see if we cannot get possession of it.'

Ulphoo now invited them to sit down, and messes were laid for six, which was also a surprise to the robbers, who exchanged looks. In the middle of the meal Ulphoo said to his wife: 'Give this guest some more bread;' but instead of bread she brought him water. Feigning anger, her husband struck her so severe a blow that she fell to the ground as if dead. Then said the robbers: 'Alas! what have you done? This crime will be fastened on us, and we shall all be hanged!' But Ulphoo took down a handsome crooked stick, which he kept in a silken cover, and tapping his wife's head with it three times, he said quietly: 'Rise, rise!' and at once the woman got up, smiled, and again sat down as if nothing had happened.

The amazement of the robbers had now reached a climax, and they said to each other: 'We must contrive by all means to get possession of this stick too, so that if any of our people die we shall know what to do.'

Supper over, they all retired to the cool shade of the garden, and sat down on bedsteads. Then said the robbers

to Ulphoo: 'Are you willing to part with your hare and your magical stick?'

'No,' answered he. 'What should I do without them? My hare is my messenger. And as for the stick, you know a man cannot restrain himself always, and it is well to be on the safe side. Besides, I sold you my mule, and I lost by the transaction.'

As their arguments availed nothing, the four robbers left him and returned the next day in company with the most substantial men of their tribe to assist them in their efforts at negotiation. 'Name,' said they, 'a price for these articles.' The more he refused, the more persistent they became, and the upshot of it was that Ulphoo affected to fall into a great rage, and cried: 'Here, take them away, you may have them as a gift!' and that they, feeling ashamed of their importunity, forced upon him two thousand rupees, and carried away both the wonderful hare and the still more wonderful stick to their village in the hills.

On reaching their homes, one of the robbers, who was more wealthy than the others, bought out his comrades and took both the prizes to his own house, where he carefully tied up the hare in his chamber, and deposited the stick in the corn-bin, which was the safest place he could think of. That done, he sat down in the midst of his family with a contented heart.

The next day he would go out ploughing. So he took up the hare, and said to his wife: 'When I want my dinner, I will send you this hare to let you know. If she tells you to prepare for one, you will prepare only for myself; but if she tells you to prepare for more, you will know that guests have come.'

Having arrived at the field, he tied the hare to a stone and went on with his ploughing. At noon, feeling very hungry, he ceased working, loosed the hare, and, giving it two smart slaps, he let it go, saying: 'Away, tell my wife to bring me out my bread quickly.' But the hare, glad of its liberty, soon escaped into the jungles.

In the evening the robber returned to the house in a great rage, and said: 'Wife, why did you not send me out my dinner?'

'I was waiting for your orders,' answered she.

'But I sent you the hare!' said he.

'No hare ever came to me,' replied she.

Notwithstanding, the duped husband visited all his rage on his wife. Lifting a heavy stick, he killed her on the spot, and not content with that, he killed also his children for attempting to save her.

When his rage began to cool he was seized with terror, and, rushing to the corn-bin, he brought forth his magic stick, and began tapping the heads of all the corpses one after another, saying: 'Rise, rise!' But he tapped in vain: not a movement, not a turn of the eye, was visible. Then he



called in his neighbours and friends, and because all the people of this village were notorious for their robberies, and even murders, they became frightened, and they said one to another: 'Never have we been so overreached! We only seized a single buffalo of that man's, and he has robbed us of six thousand rupees, and brought about all this terrible misery and bloodshed. Therefore, let us have no more to say to the villain, but let us remain quiet, lest worse befall us.'

As for Ulphoo, he kept good watch for ten or twelve days;

but as none of his enemies seemed inclined to molest him again, he at last said to his brother : 'I have avenged you on that tribe of robbers, and now I must go and visit your friend the moghul.'

When he was leaving the house he spoke to his mother, saying : 'I may be absent one month, or I may be absent twelve months ; but I shall not return until I have paid off old scores, and settled with him in full. Meanwhile Shurphoo must take care of the property.'

Then he disguised himself like a poor servant in old worn-out clothes, and with his staff in his hand he journeyed to the moghul's village, where he stopped at the huzra.

'Does anyone want a good servant ?' inquired he.

'Yes, I do,' answered the moghul, who happened to be present. 'But stay,' continued he, 'I always make one stipulation, and if you would serve me you must accept it.'

'And what is that ?' asked Ulphoo.

'If you get angry,' answered the moghul, 'I pull out your eye, and if I get angry you pull out mine.'

'Agreed !' said Ulphoo ; 'and what work do you expect ?'

'Every day,' replied he, 'you will plough six acres of land and fence it, and bring in to me from the jungle game for my table, grass for my mare, and firewood for my house, and you will cook my dinner for me.'

'All this I agree to, and even more, if you like,' said Ulphoo, with assurance. And he accompanied the moghul home.

The next morning a pair of bullocks and a plough were made over to him, and he was sent to the field. He began his labour by ploughing all round the six acres, and by ploughing twelve furrows in the middle. Next he made up four bundles of brushwood and set them at the four corners of the field. He then tied up his bullocks to a small acacia tree, and spreading his cloth on the ground, he lay down and went to sleep.

About noon the one-eyed slave girl brought his bread to him, tied, as before, by several knots, in a napkin.

'My mistress,' said she, 'bids you take out your food without untying the knots.'

Ulphoo received the napkin, tore a hole in the bottom of it, and thus took out the bread. While he was eating it he observed that one of the house-dogs had followed the girl. This little creature was a great pet of her mistress, and her name was Lownghee. When the girl was going away he contrived to detain the creature by throwing scraps of bread to her, after which he quietly caught her, slipped a rope round her neck, and tied her up to the tree.

Towards evening he went to an old dry well in the neighbourhood, where he found a little grass—about a mouthful—and he cut it, saying: 'This will do for my master's mare.'



As the forest was several miles off, and he had no mind to travel so far afield for firewood, he broke up the yoke and the plough into several pieces, saying: 'This will do for my master's fire.' Then he took the little dog and killed her, after which he skinned her, and said: 'I shall now have a rabbit for my master's dinner.'

Having completed his arrangements, he went home, and the moghul meeting him, asked: 'Have you ploughed the six acres?'

'Yes,' answered Ulphoo.

'And have you fenced them?'

'Yes,' answered he again.

'And brought in some game?'

'Certainly,' said Ulphoo; 'see, here it is!'

'And grass and firewood?'

'Of course!' once more replied the undaunted servant.

'Then,' said the mogul, 'make my dinner quickly.'

Ulphoo went away, lighted a fire, set on the pot, and made an excellent stew of poor little Lownghee.

As soon as his dinner was served the mogul sat down, and, in accordance with his usual habit, he called for the little lap-dog. 'Lownghee! Lownghee!' cried he. But he whistled and called to no purpose. Then said Ulphoo: 'Lownghee won't come!'

'And why will she not?' asked the mogul.

'How can Lownghee come to you,' answered the man, 'when you are eating her?'

'What?' said the mogul angrily; 'would you dare to put a dog before me?'

'Are you not getting angry with me?' replied Ulphoo meaningly.

'No,' answered the mogul; 'I am not getting angry. Here, take this food and throw it away, and cook me something else!'

'What shall I cook?' asked Ulphoo.

'Flesh-meat will take too long,' said the mogul, 'so make me a little sutthoo' [roasted grain prepared as a porridge].

'Nay!' said the servant; 'I will make you up in no time a nice little curry.'

'All right,' said the mogul, 'but remember to put a couple of cloves in it.'

Ulphoo, who was a good cook, then made a delicious curry with spices and sauces, and when it was ready he went into the garden and caught a frog, which he tied by the leg to a stool in the kitchen. After this he served up the dinner.

'Did you put some cloves in it?' asked the mogul.

'Yes, certainly,' answered Ulphoo; 'I caught two of them in the garden. One I put in the curry, and I tied the other by the leg to a stool. If you haven't enough, I can go

and fetch the other, and put that in too.' Then thought the mogul to himself: 'This is a very tricky fellow. I should like to see what he has been doing.' 'Go!' exclaimed he, 'and bring me that thing you have tied by the leg to a stool.'

Ulphoo left the room, but soon returned, holding up the frog between his finger and thumb, and saying: 'This is the other clove which I caught in the garden.'

The mogul then became very angry.

'What! are you getting angry?' cried Ulphoo. 'If so, give me up your eye.'



'No, no,' said the mogul hastily; 'I am not getting angry. I am only asking, why you put a frog in my food?'

'I know not what you call a frog,' said Ulphoo. 'In my country we call these things "cloves."'

The incensed mogul thrust away his plate, saying: 'Here, remove this rubbish; I won't eat it—eat it yourself.' Nor did Ulphoo wait to be told a second time; for he took the food, and, squatting down in a comfortable corner, he devoured it all himself.

In the morning the mogul got up, and began cooking his own breakfast. 'In the future,' said he to Ulphoo, 'you

cook no more food for me. Go, take your bullocks and your plough, and do your six acres !'

'And how am I to do them,' answered the imperturbable Ulphoo, 'when I have neither plough nor yoke?'

'But,' said his master, looking amazed, 'I gave both into your hands only yesterday !'

'Quite true,' said Ulphoo, 'but I broke them up and used them as firewood to cook your dinner with.'

The mogul, purple with rage, now rose and stamped with his foot: 'Did you ever hear,' cried he, 'of anyone who used his plough for firewood?'

'Are you getting angry with me?' retorted Ulphoo. 'If so, give me up your eye !'

'No, no,' protested the distracted mogul, 'I am not getting angry. Go away to the carpenter, and order another plough forthwith, and, in short, get out of my sight.'

While a new plough was being made, Ulphoo had two days of comparative idleness; and on the morning of the third day he resumed his labour. The mogul also visited the field; and when he saw the one furrow all round the six acres, and the twelve furrows in the middle, with the forlorn bits of brushwood at the four corners, he again waxed wroth, and asked: 'Is this the way farmers plough and fence their land in your country? Now attend to me. I perceive that you are more than I can manage. So leave me sharp, and get away to your own place !'

'Not so fast,' answered Ulphoo. 'If I had had anything to do at my own house, why should I have come to serve you? We stipulated that if one of us got angry, he was to give up his eye to the other. And now you are angry, since you are turning me out of your service. So give me up your eye !'

'Nay, I am not angry,' answered the mogul. 'I am merely pointing out that you should not behave like this.'

The mogul then bent his steps towards his home, leaving Ulphoo at the plough. As he walked along he could not help thinking of the story of the two men on the bank of the river: how they saw something black floating down the stream, which they imagined to be a blanket; how one

of them said to the other: 'You can swim; go out, and see what it is;' how he went, and seized it, and how it was a bear which caught him; how the man on the bank cried, 'If you can't bring in the blanket, let it go!' and how the other replied, 'I wish to let the blanket go, but the blanket won't let me go.' 'Yes,' said the mogul aloud, 'before, when I took servants, I conquered them easily, and took their eyes from them; but this fellow is not to be baffled; and what



is worse, he has caught me in his grip, and I can't get rid of the rascal.'

It happened some time after this that the mogul's wife died, and that he wished to visit a distant village for the purpose of bringing home another wife. So he saddled his mare, and, taking Ulphoo with him as his servant, he went on his way. By-and-by they approached a village, and, as it was late in the day, the mogul said: 'Let us enter the village, and lodge there for the night.'

'Let us rather stay here,' advised Ulphoo. 'Why should you run the risk of possible infection in a strange village? On this spot some travellers are already encamped, and with them we shall be safe.'

The mogul, who, as a man of substance, was of a corpulent habit, dismounted heavily from his mare and tied her to a tree. A fire was then made, and cakes were prepared for supper, and having eaten, the mogul covered up his head in his robe and went to sleep while Ulphoo watched.

Ulphoo now began thinking to himself: 'This mogul takes care never to get angry, or, at least, he denies that he does, so I must make another attempt to surprise him, and this time I may perhaps succeed.' So he got up quietly and went to some cattle-drovers who were also halting in that place, and said to them: 'My master has a fine mare here. Give me a price for her and take her off somewhere, but tie up in her place the most vicious bullock which you have in your herd. I will answer for it that in the morning you shall receive it back again, besides which you can thrash my master well for a robber, and compel him to make you compensation.'

The cattle-drovers began to laugh at the drollery of this advice, but, finding he was in earnest, some of them sprang up, singled out a wild bullock, and tied it in the place of the mare, which they sent away somewhere else. After this, Ulphoo lay down and slept.

Sometime before daylight the mogul awoke, and cried: 'Ulphoo, Ulphoo, saddle the mare!' Ulphoo, pretending zeal, fussed about for a few minutes, and then said: 'Sir, the mare is saddled and ready.' It was too dark for the mogul to see what manner of animal it was which he was about to mount, nor had he time to do so, for the moment he approached he was tossed on the bullock's horns and thrown on his back. 'In the name of heaven!' cried the poor man, 'what's this? Has my mare grown a pair of horns in the night?' Then, calling his servant, he said: 'Ulphoo, O Ulphoo, look here, and tell me quickly what animal is this!'

'If it is not your mare,' answered Ulphoo, 'what can it be?'

By this time morning began to break, and up came the cattle-drovers in a body. Seizing the bewildered mogul,

they belaboured him well with goads and sticks, saying: 'Thief, you have stolen our bullock!' The mogul retaliated, hitting out with his staff, or butting at them with his head, while he called out repeatedly: 'You are the thieves; you have stolen my mare, you have stolen my mare!' Then they thrashed him again, and finally seized him by main force, saying: 'Come along, we'll take you to the justice!'

All this time Ulphoo was holding his sides laughing immoderately. 'You are my servant,' remonstrated the mogul; 'why have you not taken my part?'



'How can I?' coolly replied he. 'How do I know where you have sent your mare? And if you have stolen this bullock the case is worse. I will do your work for you, but you must not expect me to throw myself into a well for you.'

As the herdsmen were shuffling and urging the unlucky man to come on, Ulphoo asked him: 'Why did you bring that bullock here and tie it up to our tree?'

When the mogul, in his shame and anger, heard this, he thought to himself: 'If my own servant is going to witness against me I am lost!' So he addressed himself to his persecutors, and said: Take your bullock away, and, see,

here is some money for you to leave me alone. You have stolen my mare, but never mind.'

'Nay,' retorted they, 'you have caused us trouble and loss of time. You must go to the court.'

'Ah,' groaned the mogul, 'these fellows are too much for me! They out-do Ulphoo himself.'

At this stage Ulphoo came forward and interfered, handing the men their bullock, and ten rupees out of his master's purse, and sending them away whispering and laughing.

Then said the mogul to Ulphoo: 'My mare is gone and my honour is gone too. Let us return home, and I'll buy another mare, and we can set out again. Here, pick up the saddle and let us be off!'

'Do you call this thing a saddle?' answered Ulphoo. 'I call it a basket, and in the old hut which you have given me to live in I have a dozen of them. If you want some more I can supply you with plenty, but I am not going to carry this one all the way home.'

Said the mogul, again becoming excited: 'Do you say you have baskets like this in your house? Are you aware that this basket, as you call it, cost me fifty rupees?'

'Well, pick it up yourself,' answered Ulphoo, 'I won't. If you like to carry such a wretched thing, do so.'

'What!' yelled the mogul, growing infuriated, 'did I not hire you as a servant?'

'Are you getting angry with me?' asked Ulphoo quietly.

'No, no, not at all, not at all,' replied the mogul, recovering himself. 'I was merely observing that this was a saddle, and not a basket.'

The mogul then picked up the saddle himself, and the two ill-assorted companions began their return journey. 'Look here,' said the mogul, 'it will be a disgrace for me to be seen carrying a saddle into my village. I will carry it within a mile, and to save the scandal do you take it then.'

'Well,' answered Ulphoo, 'do you carry it within a mile.'

When they arrived at the place indicated, the mogul said: 'Now you carry the saddle.'

‘Nay, that I will not,’ answered Ulphoo.

‘Why not?’ said his master, astonished. ‘You said you would.’

‘I did not say I would carry the saddle,’ said Ulphoo. ‘I said you might carry it, and I said that I had plenty of baskets of the same pattern.’

Then the mogul again began to flare up.

‘Are you getting angry with me now?’ asked Ulphoo. ‘If so, give me up your eye.’

‘No, no,’ answered the mogul, ‘I am not getting angry. I am merely pointing out that a servant should obey his master.’

‘If the thing were worth carrying,’ said Ulphoo, ‘I might take it for you; but an old basket, never!’

The mogul, who would not for shame be seen entering his village bearing a saddle on his head, was fain to take it down, lay it on the ground, tie a piece of string to it, and in that manner to make for his house by the shortest possible path, dragging the unlucky saddle behind him.

Having arrived home, the mogul borrowed another mare from a neighbour, and the next morning he started very early, so as to reach his destination on the same day. His dignity would not permit him to travel without a servant, and he was compelled to take Ulphoo with him again. They were within a mile of the village, when the mogul sent on his servant in advance, saying: ‘I shall rest here and bathe. Do you go on and request my friends to prepare my dinner for me.’

On reaching the house, Ulphoo gave the people his master’s message, thus: ‘My master sends his respects to you, and wishes you to know that in a little while he will be here. Meanwhile, he would have you prepare some dinner for him.’

They were all delighted at the intelligence, and began their preparations. But Ulphoo surprised them by saying: ‘Of course any food will do for me, as I am only a servant. But my master is indisposed, and he has asked me to say that for two days he has been taking only the food which his doctors have prescribed for him, and which he must adhere to.’

'What kind of food, then,' asked they, 'would he like?'

'You will take,' answered the man, 'one pound of the common country soap and dress it with assafœtida and spices into a kind of porridge. It is the only thing my master will touch.'

When the moghul arrived, all his new wife's relations came forward to receive him, and they gave him the seat of honour. 'I am very tired,' thought he, 'and very hungry, and when I have had a good dinner I shall go to sleep.' The food came, and the aroma which assailed his nostrils



was a trifle compared with the flavour of the first spoonful. He was amazed, and nearly beside himself with rage and disappointment, but shame kept him silent. At the same time he perceived his mischievous servant eating wholesome food close by, and eyeing him with a malicious twinkle. To make matters still worse, his host pressed him cordially to make a good meal for the credit of the house, which he was compelled to do to avoid offending them. Then, pleading fatigue, he retired to another chamber and lay down. In the middle of the night he became very sick, and complained of horrible nausea and pains and spasms. Calling his servant, he said: 'Come along with me outside; I am ill.'

'Nay,' said Ulphoo, 'if we go out now, we shall be arrested by the watchman and locked up as thieves. If you are sick, I will bring you the vessel, and in the morning I can take it out before anyone is astir.'

Before morning the moghul ordered his servant to throw out the vessel. 'I am coming,' answered he. And whenever the moghul called him he answered in like manner, 'I am coming,' but he came not. At last daylight appeared, and the moghul, for very shame, had to rise to take away the odious thing himself. He covered it with the sheet which he had thrown over his head, and, stepping out in the cold, crossed over towards the jungle.

Hardly had he left the room when his friends came in and inquired for him.

'The food you gave him last night,' said Ulphoo, 'did not agree with him at all, and he is so angry that he has started for his home. Some of you go and persuade him to return.'



He is just outside. He will make excuses ; but never mind them, bring him back.'

One or two therefore followed the moghul, and overtook him before he had time to disencumber himself of his load.

'We apologize,' said they, 'if the food was not to your liking. Do not part in anger, but come back with us.'

The moghul protested that he was merely taking the morning air; but they would listen to no excuses, and, as they laid hold of his arms in order to add a friendly violence to their arguments, the vessel which he held dropped out of his hands on to the stones and was broken. The poor man was covered with confusion, and his anger getting the better of him, he rushed back to the house to revile his servant. 'Ah, villain,' cried he, when he saw him, 'would you play your tricks on me in a strange house?'

'Are you getting angry with me?' answered Ulphoo. 'If so, give me up your eye.'

'No, no!' said the moghul, dancing and almost speechless with rage; 'I am not angry—not at all. I would merely point out to you that your conduct is infamous.' And he once more subsided.

He then went and called for his mare, and when his friends again entered the room he said: 'I must return to my home at once, as I am not well.' So he put his new wife into a palanquin, mounted his mare, and all three left for their own village.

They were within a short distance of the village, when the moghul looked back and saw that the bearers of the palanquin had lagged far behind. 'Go quickly back,' said he to Ulphoo, 'and hasten up my wife. Make her fly, so that she may be there and here in the same moment, as darkness is rapidly falling.'

Ulphoo hastened back and said to the bearers: 'Strange bearers are not permitted to enter this village, so set down the palanquin and return to your homes; other bearers will be here presently.'

The men obeyed him, and, as he was considering what he should do next, he saw a party emerging from a wood, who told him that they had just been burying a young girl of the village, who had died of a fall from a swing. A thought came into the mind of the wily Ulphoo. Bidding the bride get out of the palanquin, he took her into the wood and bound her securely to a tree. 'If you utter a sound, or

make the least noise until you are released,' said he, 'I will put you to death.' He then went on to the newly-made grave, and began to open it. A foot and a half below the surface he came to the narrow chamber, and, taking out the body, he chopped off one of its legs. With this in his hand he hurried to his master.



'What in the name of heaven is that?' exclaimed he with starting eyes.

'I am your servant,' quoth Ulphoo, 'and I have merely obeyed your orders. You told me to hasten on your wife so fast that she might be there and here in the same moment. That is exactly what I have done, for she is there, and she is also here.' And he held up the ghastly object before the astounded mogul, who, crying out, 'Villain, you have undone me; you have destroyed me, and you have killed my wife!' rushed at him savagely.

The two men instantly closed and rolled over and over, while their excited voices mingled together, Ulphoo crying: 'You are angry at last; you are angry at last!' and his master screaming: 'Yes, yes; I am angry!' But Ulphoo, being younger and stronger, soon prevailed over his obese antagonist; and while he nearly throttled him with one

hand, he plucked out his eye with the other. After this he got up and shook himself, and, returning to his own village, he said to his brother: 'Now, Shurphoo, I have reckoned in full with the mogul, and exacted eye for eye—see!' and he threw down the hideous witness before him.

From this time the two brothers lived together on the



family estate very happily, nor had Shurphoo ever again a wish to abandon his own proper work.

As for the mogul, his bride was discovered and restored to him. But he reformed his manners and turned over a new leaf, for it was never afterwards heard that he plucked out the eyes of any of his servants again.



XXXVIII.

A SLIGHT MISTAKE.

A CERTAIN villager died, and, as his body was being carried along to the grave, his little son, who was walking in front, began to address the corpse, and to say: 'Father, they are taking you now to a very narrow house. There will be no sleeping-mat for you there, nor any light; there will not be even the smell of bread, nor a single cup for you to drink from.'

Another boy, of about the same age, who was also in the procession, overheard these words, and said to his father: 'They are taking this body, then, to our house?'

'Nay, boy,' answered the father, 'not to our house, but to the grave.'

'But,' replied the child, 'the dead man's son says it is to our house, for we have no sleeping-mats; nor any lights; we have never any food to eat nor water to drink, and our house is also both dark and narrow. I think it *must* be going to our house.'

XXXIX.

THE THIEF AND THE POOR MAN.

A THIEF broke into a house in the hope of finding something worth stealing, but, unfortunately for him, the house was the home of a man who was miserably poor. When the thief entered, the owner was lying awake, sadly wondering where in the world his next meal was to come from. He neither moved nor spoke, but quietly looked on while the thief was feeling along the bare walls, and rummaging his slender property, trying hard to discover something to carry away. At last, as the fellow was leaving the room

empty-handed, the poor man grinned aloud with mocking laughter. Turning round in a rage, the startled thief exclaimed : ' What ! you are laughing, are you ? And do you call yourself the owner of a house ?'



XL.

THE TRAVELLER AND HIS CAMEL.

ONCE upon a time, a traveller, coming along the desert road with his laden camel, stopped to rest during the noon-tide heat under a shady tree. There he fell asleep. When he awoke he looked at the camel, and, finding to his sorrow



that the faithful companion of all his journeys was dead, he thus apostrophized him :

' Where is the spirit fled, ah, where
The life that cheered the weary ways ?
Couldst thou not wait one hour, nor spare
For me, thy friend, one parting gaze ?'

XLI.

THE TWO FRIENDS.

ONCE upon a time a dog and a cock were sworn friends. But a famine fell on the land, and the dog said to the cock : 'There is no food for me here, so I am going away to another country. I tell you this that you may not blame me and say, "This dog was my friend, but he left me without a word.'"

'O dog,' answered the cock, 'we are sworn friends. If you go I go. Let us go together, and as you are a dog, you can forage for us both, since if I venture about all the village curs will set on me and eat me up.'

'Agreed!' said the dog. 'When I go for food you shall hide in the jungle, and whatever I find I will fetch to you and we'll share and share alike.'

So the two friends set out. After a time they saw a village, and the dog said : 'Now I am going forward to prowl for food ; but as for you, you must remain here. But first of all, if anything should happen to you when I am away, how shall I know it ?'

Said the cock : 'Be this the signal—whenever you hear me crow three times, at once hasten back to me.'

So for some time these two creatures lived happily, the dog bringing in supplies every day, while at night he rolled himself up beneath the tree in the branches of which the cock sat safely at roost.

One day, in the absence of the dog, a jackal came to the tree, and, looking up, he said to the cock : 'O uncle, why, pray, are you perched so high ? Come down and let us join in evening prayer together.'

'Most willingly,' answered the cock ; 'but first it is necessary that I should cry the *bhāngh*,* that all good Musalmans may hear and come too.'

So the cock began to crow lustily, until the dog in the distant village heard his note, and said to himself : 'Alas !

* The Musalman cry to prayers in the Panjáb is called the *bhāngh*, and so is the crow of a cock.

something has happened to my dear old friend ; I must trot home at once.'

So he started for the jungle, but when the jackal looked round and saw him he began to sneak off, upon which the cock remarked : ' O good nephew, this is merely a pious



neighbour coming to join us. Pray do not leave us. At any rate, stop for prayers.'

' Alas ! uncle, I would stop with pleasure,' answered the jackal, ' but the fact is I have—in short, it just occurs to my mind that I forgot to perform my ablutions.* Farewell.' And, quickening his pace, he disappeared.

* I have been compelled to alter this phrase, which in the original is too coarse for modern ears. It is a most bitter satire on the excessive punctiliousness of the stricter Mahomedans in the matter of ceremonial washings.



XLII.

THE YOUNG MAN AND THE SNAKE.



HERE was once a farmer who was extremely poor. It happened that when his poverty was greatest a son was born to him, and this son was such a lucky child that his father speedily became quite as rich as he was before poor, and obtained a great name over all the country.

After a certain time the farmer thought to himself: 'I must get my son betrothed somewhere. I was poor once; but I am now rich, and my son is lucky. It is right that he should be betrothed to the daughter of some rich man like myself.'

It was long before he found a suitable match, but at last he betrothed the boy to a girl who lived in a distant town. The ceremony came on, much money was spent, many guests were invited, and much food was given away. In short, the betrothal was splendid.

The son had scarcely grown to manhood when the father died, leaving him in the world alone.

The parents of his betrothed, when they heard the sad news, felt very sorry for him, and at first they would have brought him to live at their own house. But the mother said: 'He is old enough now to come and take our daughter home with him, so let us send for him that he may do so. No friend like a good wife.'

A messenger was accordingly sent off, and the lad, when he received the invitation, dressed himself up in his best, and, mounting his mare, set off.

On the way he came to a lonely jungle, in which he saw a mongoose, and a snake of enormous dimensions, engaged in deadly combat. He reined up his horse to look on. The mongoose soon began to wear out his adversary, and to inflict such wounds as would have put an end to its life in a short time. Seeing which, the boy considered to himself:

'When two are contending, it is an act of charity to separate them.' So he tried to separate the combatants; but every time he failed, as the mungoose again and again sprang upon his adversary in spite of him. Finding he could not prevail, he drew his sword and dealt the warlike little mungoose his death-blow.

After this he went on again, but he had not proceeded far when he found that the snake had rushed round and intercepted him. Then began the boy to remonstrate.

'I did you good service,' said he. 'Why, then, have you pursued me?'

'It is true,' answered the snake, 'that you saved me from my enemy. But I shall not let you go. I shall eat you.'

'Surely,' replied the lad, 'one good turn deserves another. Will you injure me because I assisted you? In my country we do not deal with each other thus.'

'In these parts,' said the snake, 'the custom is different. Everyone here observes the rule of returning evil for good.'

The boy then began to argue with the snake, but he argued in vain, for the snake was determined to eat him. At last he said: 'Very well, snake, you can eat me; but first give me eight days to go about my business, after which I shall come back.'

With this request the snake complied, saying: 'Be it so; in eight days you must return to me.'

The snake, which had coiled himself round about the boy's body, now released his hold and suffered him to depart, so he rode on once more and completed his journey.

All his friends were very glad to see the young bridegroom, and especially his little wife, and at his father-in-law's house he remained for several days. But as he was always downcast and sad, they asked him: 'Why are you so sorrowful?' For six days they asked in vain. On the seventh they spoke to their daughter: 'Is he angry? What is the matter with him?' But she also asked him in vain.

When the eighth day came, he said: 'Now let me go home.' The father and mother then gave the daughter her portion, and, having placed them both in a bullock-cart, they sent the young couple away.

So the two travelled until they had left the village far behind them. Then said the lad to his wife and to her servants: 'Return now back again to your own home. As for me, it is decreed that I shall die on the way.'

All the servants, being alarmed, at once returned, but his young wife said: 'Where you fall, I shall fall. What am I to do at my house?' So she continued to accompany her husband.

When he arrived at the spot appointed, he dismounted from his horse and called forth the snake.

'I have come,' said he, 'in accordance with my promise. If you wish to eat me, come and eat me now!'

His wife, hearing his ominous words, descended also, and came and stood by her husband's side. By-and-by a dreadful hissing sound was heard, and the snake crawled out from the jungle, and was preparing to devour the unfortunate boy, when the girl exclaimed: 'Why are you going to eat this poor youth?' The snake then told her the whole story, how he was fighting with a mungoose, and how her husband interfered and killed his adversary; 'and in this country,' continued he, 'our custom is to return evil for good!'

The young wife now tried all the arguments she could think of to divert the monster from his purpose, but he was deaf to her pleadings and refused to listen to them. Then said she: 'You say that in this country people do evil in return for good. This is so strange a custom, and so very unreasonable, that I would fain know the history of it. How did it all come about?'

'Do you see those five talli-trees?' answered the snake. 'Go you to them and cry out to them: "What is the reason that in this country folks do evil in return for good?" and see what they will say to you!'

The girl went and did as she was bidden, addressing her request to the middle of the five.

The tree straightway answered her: 'Count us! We are now five, but once we were six—three pairs. The sixth tree was hollow, having a vast cavity in its trunk. It happened once upon a time, many years ago, that a certain thief went and robbed a house, and that the people followed

him. He ran and ran and ran, and at last he came in among us. It was night, but the moon was shining, and the thief hid himself in the hollow talli-tree. Hearing his pursuers close at hand, he besought the tree, saying: "O tree, tree, save me!" When the talli-tree heard his miserable cry it closed up its old sides upon him, and hid him in a safe embrace, so that the people searched for him in vain, and they had to return without him. When all pursuit was over, the tree once more opened and let him go. Now, in this old talli-tree there was sandal wood,* and the thief, when he went forth, had the scent of sandal wood so permanently fixed upon him that wherever he was, and wherever he appeared, he diffused a delightful fragrance. It so happened that he visited the city of a certain king, and a man passing him on the road suddenly stopped, and asked him: "Where did you get this beautiful scent?"

"You are mistaken," answered the thief; "I have no scent."

"If you will give me this scent," said the man, "I will pay you its value."

'Again the thief answered: "I have no scent—none."

'Then the man, who was shrewd and intelligent, went his way to the king and told him: "There is a stranger arrived here who possesses a most wonderful scent. To your highness, perhaps, he might be induced to give it up."

'The king then ordered the thief into his presence, and said to him, "Show me the scent you have."

"I have none," said he.

"If you will give it up to me quietly," said the king, "you shall be rewarded. If not, you shall be put to death."

'When the thief heard this he got frightened, and said: "Do not kill me, and I will tell the whole story." So he told the king how his life was preserved in the heart of the talli-tree, and how the scent of sandal wood had never left him since. Then said the king: "Come along and show me that wonderful tree of which you tell me."

'Arriving at this very spot, the king instantly gave orders

* There is a superstition that talli or sisam trees in old age develop sandal wood.

to his followers to cut the tree down and to carry it to his palace. But when the talli-tree heard his order, and when it understood the reason of it, it cried aloud : " I have saved the life of a man, and for this I am to lose my own life. For the future, therefore, let it be decreed within this jungle that whosoever dares to do good, to him it shall be repaid in evil ! " "

The girl, having heard this doleful story, returned once more to her husband's side.

' Well,' said the snake, ' have you consulted the talli-tree ? and do you find that our custom here is even as I told you ?'

She was compelled to admit that it was so ; but as the monster advanced to his victim, she wept and said : ' What will become of me ? If you must eat my husband, you must begin by eating me !'

The snake objected to an arrangement so unreasonable. ' You ?' cried he. ' But you have never done me the smallest good. You have not even done me harm. How, then, can I be expected to eat you ?'

' But if you kill my husband,' replied she, ' what's left for me ? You acknowledge yourself that I have done you no good, and yet you would inflict this injury upon me.'

When the snake heard these words he stopped, and began to grow remorseful, especially as she wept more copiously than ever. That the boy must be eaten was certain, but how should he comfort the girl ? Wishing to devise something, he crept back to his hole, and in a few minutes he returned with two magic globules or pills. ' Here, foolish woman,' said he, ' take these two pills and swallow them, and you will have two sons to whom you can devote yourself, and who will take good care of you !'

The girl accepted the pills, but, with the cunning natural to a woman, said : ' If I take these two pills, doubtless two sons will be born. But what about my good name ?'

The snake, who knew not that she was already wed, hearing her speech, became exasperated with her. ' Women are preposterous beings,' cried he, and he crept back once more to his hole. This time he brought out two more pills, and when handing them to the disconsolate girl he said :

'Revenge will sweeten your lot. When any of your neighbours revile you on account of your sons, take one of these pills between finger and thumb, hold it over them, rubbing it gently so that some of the powder may fall on them, and immediately you will see them consume away to ashes.'

Tying the former pills in her cloth, the girl looked at the other pills incredulously, and then, with a sudden thought,



she gently rubbed them over the snake, saying with an innocent air, 'O snake, explain this mystery to me again! Is this the way I am to rub them?'

The moment an atom of the magic powder had touched the snake, he was set on fire, and in another instant he was merely a long wavy line of gray dust lying on the ground.

Then with a glad face the little wife turned to her husband and said: 'Whosoever does good to anyone, in the end good will be done to him; and whosoever does evil to anyone, in the end evil will be done to him. You did good, and, lo! you are rewarded. The snake did evil, and evil befell him. All things help each other. The Almighty brings everything to rights at last.'

After this the two went on their way to their own home, where they lived in happiness and contentment for many a year.

XLIII.

THE WEAVER AND THE THIEVES.



HERE were once three notorious thieves who had a friend who was by trade a weaver. At this man's house they were accustomed to meet to plan their nocturnal expeditions, and to divide their ill-gotten gains, and he used to entertain them with water and bread and tobacco in return for various trifles which were occasionally assigned to him. One night these thieves stole four buffaloes and drove them to the weaver's, who was astonished when he saw so rich a capture enter his yard, and who said: 'You three go off for a single day and you bring back four buffaloes. Next time you must take me with you.'

'No, no,' answered his friends; 'we will present you with one of these buffaloes, but you must not come out with us.'

'I don't want this buffalo,' said the weaver. 'I should like to have something of my own earning.'

The three thieves then took away the buffaloes and hid them in a cave, and when they next went out for spoil the weaver went with them.

This time they betook themselves to a large city, and determined to break into a thatched house which seemed a likely place for plunder. The thieves therefore said to the weaver: 'You look about for a long pole, so that we can raise the thatch and get in.' The weaver looked everywhere but was unable to find one. Seeing, however, that the people of the house were sleeping outside in the enclosed space, he went to them and woke them up, vociferating: 'We are just going to break into your house, my good people! So lend us a pole to raise up the thatch.' All at once they jumped up in a fright, yelling out: 'Thieves! Thieves!' and the four house-breakers scampered off through the darkness in various directions and escaped.

After a time they met in a certain place, and the thieves said to the weaver: 'Friend, you must not come with us again. You will get us into trouble and we shall be all hanged. You remain in this place until we return.'

'This time,' answered the weaver, 'I shall be more careful, so don't be afraid, and take me too.' So all four set out together again.

After prowling through a street or two they came to a house and made a hole through the wall. The three thieves said to the weaver: 'Do you stop outside and keep watch, and we will enter and hand out the things to you.' The thieves then crawled through the hole and disappeared. A long time seemed to elapse, and at last the weaver said to himself: 'Those fellows must be hiding all the best things for themselves,' and he crept in after them.

He now found himself in complete darkness. Beginning to grope about, he happened to put his hand into the fire-place which was on the floor, and he found that the embers were still glowing. So he blew them up, and, seeing close



by him some vermicelli and sugar, he put them into a vessel and began to boil them.

Now, it so happened that the wife of the good man of the house was sleeping on her low charpoy, or bed, next to the

fireplace, and as she turned herself in her dreams she stretched out her arm over the side, and her hand, palm uppermost, came between the weaver's nose and his pot of vermicelli, where it rested. He, imagining that she was asking him for some of his mess, ladled out a spoonful boiling hot and clapped it into her hand. At once she uttered a piercing shriek, which roused up her husband, while the weaver, without a word, escaped into the rafters of the low roof, and the three thieves, who had just that moment entered laden with booty from another room, hid themselves in corners.

Now, it must be understood that the weaver's name was Kádrá, a word which in that town signified 'God.' Hardly had Kádrá got into the rafters, when the husband, who had risen in a fury, smelt the vermicelli and the sugar, and found that cooking was going on. 'Ah, you slut!' cried he to his wife, 'you have been making this nice stuff for some friend of yours, have you? and you thought I was asleep!' And, taking up a good stick, he thrashed her soundly.

The poor woman, raising her eyes to the rafters, cried through her tears: 'Kádrá (God) knows whether I have done this thing or not. I appeal to Kádrá!'

The weaver, who had come from a village where the word Kádrá was not used in that sense, thinking himself accused, and imagining that the woman was staring up at him, began to protest, saying: 'Why am I to have all the bad name? The other fellows are a good deal worse than I am. Look where they are hiding in those corners!'

Hearing these mysterious words issuing from the roof, and discovering that there was a band of thieves in his house, the astonished husband took down a sword and mounted guard over the hole in the wall, while the cries of 'Thieves! murder!' uttered by himself and his wife quickly roused up their neighbours, who presently entered in all haste, and, seizing the four confederates, carried them off to gaol.

The next morning the three thieves and the unhappy weaver, all bound together, were brought up before the king and accused of house-breaking and robbery. The king, with a solemn air, opened his law-books, but, as he was

some time examining them, the weaver cried out: 'O king, if I am to be hanged, pray hang me at once, and let me get back to my work. I am only a poor weaver, and as the sun is getting hot, my thread which was put out yesterday will all be dried up and spoilt.'

The king, who loved a joke, whether intended or not, was so amused at this speech of the weaver that he ordered his release, but the three thieves he sentenced to imprisonment, and they were taken back to gaol.



XLIV.

THE TRAVELLER AND THE OILMAN.

ONCE upon a time there was a certain traveller who was riding a mare. After a long march he came to a village and lodged at the house of an oilmaker. It happened that during the night his mare had a foal; but in the morning,



when he was preparing to resume his journey, his host came out and seized the foal, saying:

'This foal is mine. My oil-press had it last night.'

'Nay,' said the traveller, 'it is mine. My mare has been in foal for months.'

'And my oil-press,' replied the oilman, 'must have been in foal for months, too.'

As they were unable to agree, they went to the court and laid the case before the king. When each of them had made his statement, the king, after some consideration, at last addressed the traveller and said: 'Your mare could not possibly have had this foal, because, you see, it was found standing by the oil-press.'

So in his wisdom he gave a verdict in favour of the oilman, and sent the parties away.

The owner was very sorrowful indeed when he saw his foal led off by the grinning oilman, nor was his mare less so at being so cruelly parted from her young one. In vain he urged her forward. She turned her head perpetually, and tried hard again and again to trot back to her quarters of the night before.

While the poor man was in this predicament, a jackal met him and said: 'What is the matter with your mare, and why are you so sad?' Then the traveller told the jackal the story of the foal, and how the king had awarded it to the wrong party. 'Cheer up,' said the jackal. 'Only promise to keep me safe from the village dogs, and I will get you back your foal.'

The traveller, who was overjoyed to hear the jackal speak thus, at once replied: 'I will engage to keep you perfectly safe if you will help me to recover my foal.'

'Very well,' said the jackal, 'put now a cloth over me, and when you take me into the court, set me up in some conspicuous place where the king will not fail to see me, and the rest you may leave to me.'

The traveller did as he was directed. He dressed the jackal up in red cloth, which covered his head, and set him in the court-house.

When the jackal, who was sitting as still as a mouse, perceived that the king was looking in his direction, he fell suddenly down on his side. No sooner had he recovered

himself than he fell down on his other side. Again, having sat upright once more, he fell flat on his face.

The king, noticing this extraordinary proceeding, called out : 'Send and ask that child why she is falling down here, and then falling down there, here, there and everywhere in the court-house.' When the attendant approached and put the question, the jackal answered : 'That is a secret which I can only impart to the king himself. Take me quite close up, so that the king may hear, and I will tell it.'

The jackal was now conducted forward to the steps of the throne, and the king, seeing he was a jackal, began to question him.

'Why are you come here to play your jackal-tricks?'

'If my life is spared,' answered the jackal, 'I will tell you all.'

'Take your life and speak,' said the king.

Then the jackal replied : 'Last night, O king, the sea caught fire, and in order to put it out I was throwing water over it with a sieve the whole night through. Not a single wink of sleep did I get, and I am now so tired that I tumble down first on one side and then on the other, and sometimes I fall forward on my face, so weary am I with all my exertions.'

'You silly jackal!' cried the king; 'did anyone in the world ever hear of the sea taking fire? And even if it did, would anyone throw water on it with a sieve?'

'And, O king,' retorted the jackal, 'did anyone in the world ever hear of an oil-press bearing a foal?'

When the king heard that, he began to bethink himself, and after some moments he said : 'Call the traveller and the oilman once more. The jackal is right—it must have been the mare which had the foal. Therefore, take away the foal from the oilman and give it to the traveller.'

This was accordingly done, and the traveller, in gratitude and gladness, carried the jackal safely to the jungle, where he put him down and made him a low salaam, saying : 'O jackal, it is to you I owe the restoration of my foal, and your wisdom I shall ever remember!'

XLV.

AN UNFORTUNATE JACKAL.

IN the month of October, when the crops are ripe and the jackals are accordingly frisky and well fed, some of these little animals found some loose papers on the ground, and agreed to elect a lumbarďár. To the one elected they handed the manuscripts, saying : ' Hold these in your pad wherever



you go, because they are the authority by which you shall govern us.'

'Kings have crowns,' remarked one of them, 'and our lumbarďár should also possess some ensign, mark, or decoration, so that all may recognise him.'

'Tie this basket to his tail,' suggested a sly fox.

So the new lumbarďár was invested with his papers, and adorned as well with an old basket fastened securely to his tail. Just then a pack of dogs broke in upon them, and the jackals scampered off to their holes. The lumbarďár's new decoration, however, that wretched basket, caught in the entrance, and he was unable to advance. 'Come in,' cried the other jackals from within; 'come in, Mr. Lumbarďár.'

'Thank you,' answered the lumbardár; 'but you have done me too much honour, and your royal ensign keeps me fast.'

'Oh!' said they, 'show the villains your papers.'

'Precisely what I have done,' replied he; 'but they are such barbarians, these village dogs, that they cannot even read.'

In another minute the dogs had dragged forth the wretched lumbardár and despatched him.

Thus [added the story-teller] honour and rank bring many a peril and loss.



XLVI.

THE WEAVER AND THE WATER-MELON.

ONCE upon a time a poor country weaver visited a town, where he saw a quantity of water-melons piled up one above the other in front of a grain-seller's shop.

'Eggs of other birds there are,' he said, 'and I have seen them; but what bird's eggs are these eggs? These must be mare's eggs.'

So he looked at the grain-seller, and said: 'Are these eggs mare's eggs?'

The man instantly cocked his ears; and perceiving that he was a simpleton, answered: 'Yes, these eggs are mare's eggs.'

'What is the price?' inquired the countryman.

'One hundred rupees apiece,' said the grain-seller.

The simple weaver took out his bag of money, and, counting out the price, bought one of the melons and carried it off. As he went along the road, he began to say to himself: 'When I get home I will put this egg in a warm corner of my house, and by-and-by a foal will be born, and when

the foal is big enough, I shall mount it and ride to the house of my father-in-law. Won't he be astonished ?'

As the day, however, was unusually hot, he stopped at a pool of water to bathe. But first of all he deposited the melon most carefully in the middle of a low bush, and then he proceeded to undress himself. His garments were not half laid aside, when out from the bush sprang a hare, and the weaver, snatching up part of his clothing while the rest



hung about his legs in disorder, made desperate efforts to chase and overtake the hare, crying out : ' Ah, there goes my foal ! Wo, old boy—wo, wo ! ' But he ran in vain, for the hare easily escaped, and was soon out of sight. The poor weaver reconciled himself to his loss as best he could. ' Kismet ! ' cried he ; ' and as for the egg, it is of course of no use now, and not worth returning for, since the foal has left it.'

So he made the best of his way home, and said to his wife : ' O wife, I have had a great loss this day.'

' Why,' said she, ' what have you done ?'

' I paid one hundred rupees for a mare's egg,' replied he ' but while I stopped on the road to bathe, the foal jumped out and ran away.'

' Ah, what a pity ! ' cried the wife ; ' if you had only

brought the foal here, I would have got on his back, and ridden him to my father's house !'

Hearing this, the weaver fell into a rage, and, pulling a stick out of his loom, began to belabour his wife, saying : ' What ! you would break the back of a young foal ? Ah ! you monster, let me break yours.'

After this he went out, and began to lament his loss to his friends and neighbours, warning them all : ' If any of you should see a stray foal, don't forget to let me know.' To the village herdsmen especially he related his wonderful story : how the foal came out of the egg, and ran away, and would perhaps be found grazing on the common-lands somewhere. One or two of the farmers, however, to whom the tale was repeated, said : ' What is this nonsense ? Mares never have eggs. Where did you put this egg of yours ?'

' I put my egg in a bush,' said the weaver, ' near the tank on the way to the town.'

' Come and show us !' cried the farmers.

' All right,' assented the weaver ; ' come along.'

When they arrived at the spot, the melon was found untouched in the middle of the bush.

' Here it is,' cried the weaver ; ' here's my mare's egg. This is the thing out of which my foal jumped.'

The farmers turned the melon over and over, and said : ' But what part of this egg did the foal jump out of ?'

So the weaver took the egg, and began to examine it.

' Out of this,' cried one of the farmers, snatching back the melon, ' no foal ever jumped. You are a simpleton, and you have been cheated ! We'll show you what the foals are.'

So he smashed the melon on a stone, and, giving the seeds to the weaver, said : ' Here are foals enough for you ;' while the farmers themselves, amid much laughter, sat down and ate up the delicious fruit.



XLVII.

THE PRINCE AND THE VIZIER'S SON.

PART I.



ONCE upon a time there was a certain prince who was strongly attached to the son of his father's vizier, so that the two youths became inseparable companions. On one of their hunting excursions, when they had ridden far away into the wilds, the prince, weary of the long chase, and suffering from intense thirst, cried: 'Oh for some water now, from tank or pool or well! Where shall I find water in this wilderness, destitute of a single village?'

Hard by there happened to be growing a clump of trees, and to them the two friends rode, and there they dismounted. And because the prince's distress increased, the vizier's son spread his mantle under a tree, and said to his master: 'Rest you here awhile, and let me go and look for some water.' So the prince lay down, and the full foliage of the tree screened him from the burning sun; for trees are not like men: they endure upon their own heads piercing heat and driving rain, yet the wayfarer's head they shelter and protect.*

Having searched awhile, the vizier's son at last found some water in a lonely garden. In the garden there was a well, with a flight of steps leading down to the water's level. So he descended and filled his vessel. On his way up, as he was bearing the water, he saw painted on the side of the staircase the portrait of some princess. Her hair was all loose and flowing. In one hand she held a lemon, and with the other she was lightly drying her dishevelled tresses.

* This is a very favourite figure among the people of the Panjáb.

She was so exceedingly handsome that the vizier's son thought within himself: 'If the prince now should chance to see this likeness, he will cause me infinite trouble, for he will bid me bring him the princess herself.' So he took some earth, and mixing the water with it, he made clay, and smeared it all over the picture, obscuring it from view. Then he descended once more, and having filled his vessel a second time, he returned to the prince, and gave him to



drink. Having drunk the water, the prince's strength revived, and, standing up, he said: 'Now I shall go and examine the garden for myself.'

'The garden is a wilderness in the midst of a wilderness,' said the vizier's son. 'It is wild and desolate. Who knows what things may abide there? Let us avoid it, for to remain in it cannot be safe. Let us rather mount and begone.'

'Nay,' replied the prince, 'I have a fancy to see it.'

So they both went to it, and entered within it, and the prince was delighted with the massive walls and the grandeur of the trees. After walking about it for some time, they at last came to the well, and, the prince leading the way, they began to descend. Gazing about him, he said: 'These walls are beautiful, excepting just here. Who has been spoiling these lovely designs with a vile coating of

mud? Wash off this mud, and let us restore the colour once more.'

'That is a thing we cannot do,' answered the vizier's son. 'And why? The garden is the owner's, and this is surely not our business, but his.'

The prince, however, paid no heed; but he went down, and threw up water against the wall until the earth was all washed off, revealing the likeness clearly and distinctly. Then the prince sat him down opposite to the picture, and looked at it. Long time he looked at it, and at last he said: 'Now life to me is nothing. Until I meet this lady, whoever she is, I shall be miserable; and if I do not meet her, here I shall die.'

The vizier's son was sore perplexed: 'Who knows,' said he, 'when this drawing was made? She may have died ages ago, and where then shall we look for her?'



'If she be dead,' answered the prince, 'then I die too. When I hear the fatal tidings, "She is dead," that moment shall be my last!'

Again the prince said: 'If anyone deems himself my friend, he will bring me this princess.' And with these words he lay down prostrate from sorrow.

Once more the prince looked up, and said: 'If from your

heart you are really my friend, you will go quickly and bring me this princess.'

The vizier's son then began to consider within himself: 'If I do not attend to the prince's orders, I shall bring ruin on myself and my father the vizier, too; and if I leave him here and return alone, the king will slay me; and it may be he will slay my father as well, and my father and mother will load me with reproaches, saying, "See what a son was ours, who could not save himself, and who ruined us!" To return to my home alone, therefore, is not to be thought of.'

He then endeavoured to rouse up his master, saying: 'Let us at least go to the next village, and ask to whom this well belongs.'

'I cannot quit this beautiful face,' answered the prince. 'I am sick to the heart for her, and here I am determined to stay for ever.'

At last the vizier's son left him, and set out alone. After riding some distance, he came to a town, where he met a man to whom he said: 'Whose is the garden in the wilds in which there is a well? Is it a prince's or a merchant's?'

'That garden in the wilds,' answered the man, 'a merchant made, and he dug the well for the sake of charity; and he used always to keep a servant there, and his order was: "Whenever a traveller comes, give him food; to a Hindoo, uncooked; to a Mussulman, cooked—and I shall pay for all; but let no one go empty away." That good merchant, however, is dead; and his sons were worthless, and they turned off the servant, and now they do not go there even themselves, lest they should be expected to entertain strangers.'

'I should like,' said the vizier's son, 'to see that son of the merchant who is the least worthless of them all.'

So the man took the vizier's son to the merchant's house, where he found in possession the eldest son.

'Does the garden in the wilderness belong to you?' asked the youth.

'It is mine,' answered the son.

'And the garden-well, too?' asked the other.

'That, too, is mine; both are mine,' answered he.

'Then, who are they,' continued the vizier's son, 'who built the well?'

Then the man told him that the builder of that well was a man who dwelt in a town some distance away; and when he heard that, the vizier's son at once went there, and after two days' journey he arrived, and finding the builder, he said to him: 'Did you build that well?'

And the man took him in and showed him hospitality, and kept him there for the night, and told him, saying: 'Yes; that well was built by me.'

Then said the vizier's son: 'What portrait was that which you painted on the wall?'

'The well was mine,' answered the man, 'but the portrait was the work of my elder brother, who lives in another village.'

Now, the person who spoke thus was himself a very old man, and the vizier's son began saying to himself: 'The brother of whom he speaks must be of immense age. Can he be living still? How unfortunate this is!'

Nevertheless, he started for the next village without delay, and soon discovered the house to which he had been directed. But, to his surprise, the owner seemed far younger than the man he had just quitted, and when he looked at him he began to think: 'This man cannot possibly be the elder brother. He must be someone else.' Nevertheless, his host bade him enter and, seeing he was a stranger, he put down a bed for him, and entertained him liberally. The vizier's son, however, did not mention the object of his visit that night, and when morning came, he said to himself: 'I suppose the elder brother is absent from home, and I must wait until he return.' Yet he made no communication to his host, though he was the very man he sought.

The next night the man, whose politeness was now satisfied, said to him: 'On what business have you come to my house?'

'I have come,' answered he, 'to inquire concerning a well in a certain garden in the forest owned by a merchant. I have heard that you built it. Is that so?'

'Yes,' answered the man, 'it was I who built the well.'

'And was it you,' continued the vizier's son, 'who drew the likeness on the wall?'

'No,' said he. 'The well I built, but the likeness was painted by another brother still older than I, and he lives elsewhere.'

Learning the name of the place, the vizier's son once more set off on his search; and finding the town, he inquired for the house. 'Mine is the house,' answered the first person whom he accosted.

Now, this man seemed still younger than either of the other two, a strange circumstance which astonished the vizier's son more than ever. But, accepting his invitation, he went to his house, and in the evening his host said to him: 'What business have you come upon?'

Then said the vizier's son: 'That I will tell you presently. But I am strangely puzzled. You look quite a young man. Have I turned mad, or are you mad?'

'Any information I can give you,' returned the other, 'shall be at your service.'

Now, his wife was at that time very poorly, yet he bade her, saying: 'Go, wife, to the top of the house, and fetch me down an apple which you will find on a shelf.' Though she was so feeble, yet without a word she instantly arose, and, going up to the house-top, she brought down the apple and gave it to her husband. Having taken the apple from her hand, he said: 'Now go up again and bring me down another apple which is also there.' Instantly the wife again obeyed her husband and presently returned with the other apple. 'There is a third apple,' then said he, 'haste, and bring that too.' She went as she was bidden, but she found no more, so she came down and said: 'There is no third apple there.'

The man then turned to the vizier's son, and said: 'By this have you understood anything?'

'I have understood something,' answered he, 'but not all. Go on with your story.'

Then said the builder to the vizier's son: 'Ever since that excellent wife of mine has come into the house, my life has been easy and happy. The youngest of my two

brothers, who looks so aged and worn, his wife does not obey him, neither does she regard him; and what is the consequence? He is the most miserable man alive. Worse than a hundred diseases is the disease of anxiety. When he asks for water, she answers: "Get up, and fetch it for yourself." If he asks for bread, it is the same thing. Since the day on which that woman took up her abode in my brother's house he has not had a moment's happiness, and his anxiety has eaten him up. Therefore it is that he has grown so aged in his appearance. As to my other brother, his wife obeys him in part, but in part only. Sometimes,



indeed, she makes her husband's heart happy, but at other times she renders him wretched. And that is the reason he does not age so rapidly as the other. And now, O friend, tell me the object of your journey.'

'About the well in the forest-garden—was it you who built it?' answered the son of the vizier.

'As to the garden, I know nothing,' said the man. 'I built the well, but at that time there was no garden. After the well was built, someone else must have made the garden.'

'But who drew that beautiful likeness?' asked the vizier's son.

'That likeness?' said he. 'Why, I drew it myself.'

'And where did you see the original of such a face as that?' said the vizier's son.

'What would you do with her?' replied the other. 'To begin with, you could not gain her.'

'My prince,' said the vizier's son, 'after looking on that picture, has fallen into desperate illness, and there he lies, and he declares that if I obtain that princess I shall save my life, but that if not I must die.'

'But no one may visit her,' said the mason. 'If a man dare even so much as to look up at her windows, the king, her father, takes out his eyes, and whosoever points towards the house loses his hand.'

'And if the king's orders are so exceeding strict,' said the vizier's son, 'how on earth were you able to draw her?'

'I happened to be in the city where she lives,' replied he; 'and as I was crossing the river in a boat, the current drove me under her palace walls. I did not dare to look up, but in the smooth water beneath I saw reflected her likeness, as she sat at her casement. In one hand she held a lemon. With the other she was arranging her flowing hair. Having my colours with me, I at once sketched her portrait exactly as she appeared.'

Then asked the vizier's son the name of the town, and,



bidding his host farewell for the time, he hastened away. On the road he came to a wood, in which some little boys were grazing their cattle. But they had caught a tortoise, and were playing with it, beating it with sticks and kicking it like a ball. Seeing this cruel sport, the vizier's son became sorrowful, and exclaimed: 'Look how everything that has breath suffers when beaten about!' So he begged them to let the creature go. 'If you are so fond of the tortoise,' answered they, 'give us five rupees and take it.' So he gave them the money, and took the tortoise; and when he had come to some water he set it at liberty, and let it go.*

After that he went along, and at last he came to the city in which lived the beautiful princess. Then thought he to himself: 'I am a man, and the king's orders are so dreadful, what shall I do? I will disguise myself as a woman, and in that character it will be easier for me to find her. Even if I knew some woman here, and confided my plans to her, the secret that someone is after the princess would be sure to leak out, and then I should be killed. My best plan is so to manage that no one may suspect, while at the same time I succeed in my object.' So he went and bought some jewels; and then he dressed himself up as a woman, adorning himself with the jewellery. Having so done, he went once more into the bazaar, and bargained for a supply of bangles; and having procured a rich variety, he put them into a basket, and went crying them up and down the city among the palaces of the nobility. And as he cried, 'Bangles; who'll buy bangles?' he looked so exceedingly handsome that many a purchaser called him in to fit on his bangles. But his prices were so exorbitant that the commoner folk were unable to buy. Two days he cried his bangles, and on the third day he chanced to find himself under the palace of the princess, and as he cried, 'Who'll buy my bangles?' the princess heard him and looked out; and when she saw him, that he was so handsome, she sent

* That the tortoise here mentioned does not play an important part in the sequel is due to some accidental omission in the narrative of the story-teller.

a slave-girl, and called him in, and said to him : 'Fit some of your bangles on my arms.' So he began to try on some bangles ; but he delayed and delayed as much as possible, almost till the evening, because some he wilfully broke, while others were too large, and others, again, too small ; and the more the princess regarded him, the more she felt some secret attraction towards him. At last, however, she was suited ; and then, because he was so beautiful, the princess bade him attend on her every day and sell her some bangles. Joyfully the vizier's son took his leave, and the next day he returned again : and so he kept



coming and going for some time. At last the princess said to him : 'You break an enormous number of bangles. When you go back in the evening, is not your master angry with you ?'

At these words he grew very thoughtful, for he knew not what to say or how to tell her who and what his master was. At last he answered her : 'I am only a traveller from a distant town, and in your town I am a stranger.' After that he added, 'My husband is very ill. When I left him to-day he was nearly dead, and who knows if I shall now find him alive ?'

After these things the princess took so great a fancy to the beautiful bangle-seller that she kept him near her

constantly; and one day she said to him: 'Even if your husband does die, you can stay with me, and then you need not sell bangles any more. I am a king's daughter, and here there is plenty of everything. Eat what you like and dress as you please.'

Three or four days passed by, and then the vizier's son went to the palace, and said: 'My husband is dead!' The princess, finding him free, ordered a slave-girl to take his basket of bangles and cast them into the river; after which she said to him: Now throw off your mean garments, and array yourself in beautiful clothes like mine.' So the vizier's son retired; and when he had dressed himself up, he returned to the princess, who took up a mirror and looked at herself and then looked at him; and as she did so, she thought within herself: 'This bangle-seller is even handsomer than I am.'

One day the princess became very sorrowful and began



to cry. Her maidens said to her: 'O princess, why are you crying?' But she answered them never a word. But when the vizier's son spoke to her, she began to disclose to him her grief, even her whole heart, which never before had she confided to anyone. 'In my heart I have one sorrow,' said she. 'I now wish to marry, but I have told my father I

shall marry only the man I love. I told him this because who knows where he might get me married, or what the suitor might be like? But I would have a husband as handsome as myself. And when I look at my face in the mirror, and where I see you not less beautiful than myself, I weep, for I think what a wonder of the Almighty it would have been if you had been a man instead of a woman. What a peerless pair we should have made !'

'But do not cry, princess,' said he. 'Have patience. If this is all your grief, Providence will grant your wish. I mean to have a husband as handsome as yourself. I know a certain town, and in it there is a holy shrine. Whoever goes there and prays and gives an alms ever attains his desires.'

'Two thousand rupees shall I give in charity,' cried the princess, 'if one of us two can become a man.'

After some days the princess again spoke to the vizier's son, and asked him more about the shrine. 'You must have patience for a time,' answered he, 'for I fear to speak much on account of the king, your father, who is harsh.'

'Whatever I ask my father,' answered she, 'he never denies me.' Again she said : 'Tell me all your mind.'

The vizier's son then disclosed the secret to her, and said : 'Now I am turned into a man.'

Now, when the princess heard those words she was glad, and said to him : 'Listen ! if I steal away with you the world will reproach me. But do you so contrive matters that the king himself shall tell us to go, since we cannot get off without his permission. Here, take these four thousand rupees. Go at once, and, resuming your proper dress, purchase merchandise and bring it into the city for sale.'

Then the vizier's son, naming the day of his return, set forth, for he went to a distant town, changed his clothes on the way, and, having bought servants and horses and rich stuffs in abundance, he came back to the city and took up his abode in a superb mansion. There the princess came to see him disguised as a man, and when he had presented himself at the court, she said to the king : 'Let this be the day of my marriage, and let my choice be the new merchant.'

When the king heard that he was pleased, because he looked on the rich merchant with the utmost favour. 'O my daughter,' said he, 'you have permission to marry when and whom you like. So let it be.' Then the king sent for the merchant and made a great feast, and the ceremony of



marriage was performed with splendour and with general satisfaction.

Now, as soon as the wedding rite was over, the vizier's son, under pretence of visiting the shrine for the purpose of distributing doles, mounted his horse, and, taking his bride with him, he at once rode away to the garden and the well in the distant wilderness, where he had left the prince and all their substance. And he said to the princess: 'Whatever my faults in the past may appear, O princess, forgive me for all!' She forgave him, and presently they arrived at the well, and to the prince the vizier's son said: 'The princess has come.' As soon as the prince looked at her face he was glad, but he did not speak to her then. Presently the vizier's son again said to the princess: 'I have used deceit with you from the first. Will you forgive me? I went to you for the sake of this prince, my lord and master. I am only his servant, and, besides, I am also his friend.'

The princess accepted her fate, saying: 'My father gave

me to you. You are now my master. Therefore, give me away to whomsoever you please.'

The vizier's son then brought the prince and put his hands into hers, and the prince and princess, charmed with each



other, exchanged vows of eternal fidelity. And when all this was done, the whole party returned once more to the prince's own court, where, in the presence of the king and queen, the real nuptials were celebrated, being attended with unusual rejoicings in all parts of the kingdom.



PART II.



AFTER these things the prince showered on his friend abundance of favours, for he enriched him and gave him villages and lands, saying that he loved him before all men, and feeling sure that if he bade him go and do anything, however difficult, he would do it. In consequence of all this, it soon happened that the vizier's son became an object of envy to many of the other courtiers, who, seeing him always next to the prince, riding or walking, or playing at chess, plotted how they might destroy him. Among the rest there was one man, named Bugla, whose jealousy found expression in deeds as well as words, for he promised to give a large sum to anyone who could sow distrust between the prince and his favourite. 'Let me make the prince angry with the vizier's son,' said he, 'and then, when he is king, he will kill him, and I shall be vizier instead.' In order to compass his ends, he looked out an old woman suitable for the purpose, and, when he had found one, he said to her: 'See, here is money; do my bidding as I shall direct.' And when the old woman understood his drift, she said: 'Get me four bearers and let them bring me a rich litter, and bid them do whatever I deem necessary.' So the men were provided and the palanquin; and when the old woman had dressed herself in fine array, she entered, telling the bearers: 'When I lower my hand, set the litter down; and when I raise my hand, lift it up and bear me away.' Then she covered her face with her veil, and she was borne to a place which the prince and his friend had to pass when riding to tennis. Here her bearers set her down, in obedience to her desire; and beckoning to the prince, she signed him to come near, as though she had a petition to offer. But the prince sent the vizier's son, who

approached, and she beckoned him nearer, and laid her hand on his neck, and drew him towards her, and made as though she were whispering to him something of importance. But she spoke not a single word. Having thus accomplished her design, she entered, gave the signal, and instantly her bearers lifted her litter and bore her away.

Then said the vizier's son to himself: 'The woman has not uttered a syllable. What message, then, can I give the



prince?' When he returned, therefore, his face was troubled, for he knew not what to say.

'What did the woman want?' inquired the prince.

'I know not,' answered he, 'for she did not even speak.'

The prince felt annoyed. 'Some secret, I suppose,' said he to himself. 'All right, Sir Vizier; keep it to yourself.'

The next day the woman returned in exactly the same way, and did precisely the same thing, and when she had gone, the prince again said: 'Well, what was her message to-day?'

'Not a word did she utter,' answered the vizier's son.

Then the prince began to get very sorrowful. 'Now see,' said he, 'what happens. This man no longer confides in me.' And he began to harden himself against his friend.

The next day the wretched woman came again, and

repeated exactly the same performance; and again the prince sent the vizier's son to receive her petition; but she said nothing, going off suddenly just as before. Once more, also, the prince asked his friend the object of her mission, saying: 'What did she say?' And once more the vizier's son was compelled to answer 'Not a word.'

'Is it such a secret that you cannot tell me?' cried the prince in a rage.

'I have no secret,' answered he, 'for I have received no communication. The woman must be mad, I think.'

Then the prince became still more angry than before, and, dismissing his favourite, he bade him begone to his house. He also himself threw down his bat, and went to the palace, where he met the king, his father, who, when he saw him, addressed him, but the youth answered not, for he was speechless with rage.

'O son,' said the king, 'has anyone presumed to affront you? If so, cheer up: he shall die immediately.'

'My vizier,' answered the prince, 'is no longer the same man to me that he was. He is now nothing to me, and worse than nothing. Never shall I have peace of mind again until he is slain, and a bowl of his blood brought to me for testimony.'

'Is that all?' said the king. 'Be of good cheer, my son. Consider him dead already, for he shall die at once.'

Then the king went forth to his own house, and summoned his executioners, and ordered them to seize the vizier's son, and to carry him into the forest, and to behead him, and to bring back his two eyes and a cup of his blood. So, having caught the unfortunate youth, they led him away.

Now, as they were preparing to despatch him, he said to them: 'Hear me speak one word, since what I say may be of service to you hereafter. You have been told to kill me. But if you kill me, to-morrow you will find that the prince will be saying: "Bring back my vizier—bring back my vizier!" Then what will you do? He will certainly avenge my death on yourselves. Follow good advice: kill something else, and take the blood of that.'

Three of the men who had been sent then said to the

fourth : 'This young vizier seems in a fright for his life. He does not talk as if he wished to lose it.'

'Let us be cautious,' answered the fourth, who was wiser than his fellows. 'This is a great man and he speaks truly, for, being a vizier's son, he knows all things. I have a tame deer. Let us kill that and carry its eyes and its blood to the king.'

To this they all agreed, but they said : 'Let us, however, detain this man somewhere so that he cannot escape, lest all become known and evil befall us.'

So they hid him and fed him, and in his stead they killed the deer ; and the eyes and the blood they took to the prince, who, when he saw them, was glad, and said : 'A man who



would turn his back, let him die the death.' But the eyes and the blood he gave to be thrown away.

Some days elapsed and then Bugla, the plotter, came forward and petitioned for the office of vizier. 'Very well,' was the answer, 'you can be vizier.' So he was appointed, and forthwith began to attend the person of the prince.

One day the prince went out to snare partridges, and took with him his new vizier. When tired of the sport, since the birds were shy and refused to be decoyed, he thought he would like to bathe.

'Shall I bathe to-day, or not?' said he to Bagla.

'If you would like to bathe,' answered he, 'you will do well to bathe; but if you would rather not bathe, it will be best to leave the bathing alone.'

Then thought the prince to himself: 'Here is an answer for a vizier! If my old friend had been by my side, he



would have advised me distinctly which to do, the one or the other.'

Some time after he said to his vizier: 'Shall we go hunting to-day, or shall we not?'

'To hunt is good,' answered he, 'and not to hunt is good. I should hunt to-day if I felt thereto inclined, but if I felt otherwise I should not hunt on any account.'

After hearing this, the prince's mind reverted still more to his former favourite, and he thought with a sigh: 'My old minister was different. He would have advised me freely one way or the other. This fellow, however, is such an owl—where could I have found him?'

Once more they went out hunting, and as they rode along they saw a beautiful princess in a boat, and she, when she saw the prince, began to make signals to him. First she pointed to her breast, then to her head, and lastly she laid her hand upon a vessel which stood beside her.

'What mean those signs?' asked the prince of the vizier.

'You have two eyes, O prince,' answered the man, 'and I have two eyes. You see, and I see. But what the lady means I cannot imagine.'

This reply set the prince thinking more than ever, and he thought to himself: 'As for this fellow, he is not worth keeping.' He became so vexed and sorrowful that on his return home he dismissed his minister altogether, and from



grief of heart he went and lay down on his bed and became very sick. His father, having been informed of his illness, went to his chamber to see him. 'O son,' said he, 'what is now the matter?'

'Nothing,' answered the prince, 'but I wish back my vizier; and if I cannot have him back, I am willing myself to die the same death.'

'Courage, my son,' said the king. 'I will look to it myself, and straightway he shall be restored to you.'

Then the king went out and called for his hangmen, and said to them: 'Produce the vizier's son on your lives!'

'O king,' answered the men, 'you ordered us to kill him. If, then, we had spared his life, our own lives would have

paid the price. Where in the world are we to look for him now ?'

'If you do not find him and bring him here instantly,' cried the angry king, 'I shall have you killed precisely in the same way as he was killed.'

Then the men went forth, saying to themselves: 'How fortunate for us! What a mistake we should have made, but for the wisdom of the vizier!' And forthwith they went, and, delivering him out of prison, they brought him to the king, and the king took him to the prince, who at once began to amend.

For a time these two friends were a little strange and distant with each other, but soon their old habits revived, and they were to be seen as much together as ever. One day they went out hunting, and as they approached the river the prince began telling the vizier's son about the mysterious signals which had been made to him by the beautiful princess. 'What,' asked he, 'did she mean by those signs ?'

'When she put her hand towards her forehead,' answered his friend, 'she meant that her name was Chushmá Rānee, or the Eye Rānee; when on her breast, she meant to say: "If you visit my country, my heart shall be yours"; and when she touched the bowl, she intended you to understand that the name of her home was Lotah (a bowl).'

'Is it even so?' said the prince. 'Then let us set off instantly and see her.'

'Alas!' answered the vizier's son, 'how much pain and trouble the other princess cost us; and who knows how much more we may suffer from this!'

'We are to die but once,' replied the prince gaily. 'Let us, therefore, go and seek her.'

In vain the young minister endeavoured to dissuade his master from the rash enterprise. A prince's will is like the whirlwind or the torrent, which will not be denied.

In a few days their preparations were completed, and both companions set out on their travels once more. In due time they came to a certain town where they found a noble garden stocked with all manner of trees. 'Let us

spend the night here,' said the prince. But the woman in charge refused her consent. 'You wish to stay here,' said she. 'But Chushmá Raneé also comes here, for this garden is hers, and if she find you here she will be angry, and her anger will fall on me.' But the vizier's son bribed her, saying: 'Prepare us a place, and, here, take for your trouble these four gold coins.'

So the woman set to work to prepare them a lodging in the garden. All day long she was thus engaged, and when evening came she sat down and cried bitterly. Seeing her, the vizier's son said: 'O woman, what is the matter, and why are you weeping?'

'Every day at twelve o'clock,' answered she, 'it is my duty to prepare three hundred and sixty necklets of flowers, and to take them to the princess. Now it is evening, and how shall I perform my task? I am undone!'

'Bring hither the flowers,' said the vizier's son, 'and let me prepare them for you.'

So he began to thread the flowers, and he made such beautiful garlands as had never been seen by the gardener's wife before. After all was ready he said to her: 'Which necklet will the princess herself wear, do you think?'

'All those on the top,' answered she, 'she divides among her young companions, and the last of all she keeps for herself.'

When the vizier's son heard that, he wrote an exquisite letter and attached it to the lowest necklet in the basket, and in the letter he told the princess that the Prince of the River had come to see her. So the woman carried them all to the princess, and laid them before her as usual. When she had examined a few of them, she said: 'O woman, who made these necklets?'

'A sister of mine has come from the country to see me,' answered she. 'I gathered the flowers, and my sister wove the necklets.'

The princess declared them beautiful, and began to distribute them to her maidens. The last she took up and put round her own neck, but observing the note, she opened it and read it in haste. Then she turned to the woman and

said : ' Do you still say your sister wove these flowers ? do you speak the truth ? ' The woman fell down at her feet and confessed that some merchants had come and lodged in the garden. So the lady pencilled a note and gave it to the woman, saying : ' Go and give this message to the merchant who made my necklet. ' And the woman went and delivered it to the vizier's son, who read the message to the prince.



' It is my custom,' ran the note, ' to exact implicit truth from all my suitors. The man who fails in this respect is at once seized by my attendants and thrown from my windows into the street. I have asked my father a favour, and he has granted that I may marry only him whom I see and like. Let me know how many followers you have with you, that I may send them all needful supplies. Also come to my house and visit me.'

' This is a strange letter,' said the prince.

' It is the inconsequent letter of a woman,' answered the vizier's son. ' But, come, make haste ! Tell her you have come absolutely alone ; but beware, see that the couch has been properly arranged before you sit down. She will put you to the test. If the cushions are wrongly placed, still you must sit at the head of the couch, and, as the head is always slightly higher than the foot, here, take this lemon

and lay it on the couch, and, as it moves, so it will tell you which is the head and which is the foot.'

So the prince set off, while the vizier's son, to forestall mischance, went to the bazaar, where he found a long train of camels laden with cotton. This cotton he secured, and induced the merchants to set it down for him close to the walls of the palace, and he saw it laid beneath the apartments of the princess, and then he said: 'My master, who is a rich merchant, is absent on business, therefore leave the cotton here on approval while I go and seek him, and meanwhile give us the refusal of it in consideration of this payment if we do not complete the bargain.'

Meanwhile, the prince had arrived at the palace, and had been received with favour. The lemon revealed to him the real head of the couch, and he sat down as every prince ought to sit. Then said the princess: 'Have you no servants with you? If you have, let me provide for them.'

'I have come to your town,' answered he, 'unattended by anyone.'

Then she gave him sweetmeats and sherbet, paying him great attention; and when evening approached, three hundred and sixty maidens, all richly attired in coloured silks and adorned with necklets of flowers, entered the chamber and stood in a row before them. Then said the princess to him: 'You may be alone, and I may be alone; but when kings move about they are accompanied by troops and guards, and if no guards go with them, yet is the minister never forgotten. Tell me now, have you your minister with you or not? Because if you have, one of these maidens shall go and attend on him, so that he may not want for comfort in a strange land.'

The prince was so enchanted by all he saw that he forgot his promise, and, pointing to a beautiful damsel, he said: 'Let this girl, then, be my minister's attendant.'

Then the eyes of the princess darted out sparks of anger, and crying: 'You know the penalty—destruction to the suitor who lies to me!' she summoned some of her strongest women, who seized the prince and cast him headlong out of the palace windows. Down and down he fell,

but he escaped death by falling on the cotton, which was collected in abundance on the pavement beneath. Nevertheless, he was stunned, and all night long he continued to lie there in a profound sleep.

Next morning his minister discovered him, and roused him, saying: 'Up, O prince, why continue to lie here?' Then he went to the merchants, and to them he said: 'Your cotton is not approved of, so take your goods and take also your money and go.'

The two friends then sat disconsolately down just where they were, and began to consider their position.

'My counsel is that we return home,' said the vizier.

'Never!' answered the prince; 'with what face could I show myself at court without the princess?'

'I warned you not to speak of me,' said the vizier's son,



'but to say you had travelled alone, for I had a scheme to win her. Where was your memory?'

'Nevertheless,' said the prince, 'you must manage affairs so well that I may visit the lady again.'

'People who are in kings' houses,' returned the vizier, 'speak but once. You will never be admitted again, and you will lose your life over her.'

'As for me,' said the prince, 'it matters little whether I go back alive or dead.'

'O prince,' continued the vizier, 'you lack wisdom. With prudence you would have won her, but how are you to win her now? The only thing left for us is to turn fakeers and don the yellow robe.'

So the two friends disguised themselves as religious mendicants, and dressed themselves in the appropriate costume. 'O king,' said the vizier's son, 'the good fortune we had looked to find has slipped from our hands. Gone is all openness and all candour. Henceforth we deal only with deceit.'

Now, in that town there was a certain vacant house, containing a courtyard and a double entrance, one to the front and the other in the back. This house, being suitable for their purpose, they hired, and while the attendant sat solemnly in a cell at the front door, his master occupied a secluded cell within the enclosure. The arrival of two strange fakeers was soon hinted abroad, and many of the poor came to solicit their prayers. But the vizier's son was wont ever to send them in to visit the prince, saying: 'I am only a servant, but the great saint, my master, dwells within.' One by one he sent them in, nor would he allow more than one to enter at a time. And the prince, in his character as a holy man, was for ever seen devoutly telling his beads and mumbling his prayers. And as he always kept under the corner of his robe a store of money which he distributed freely, his fame and his sanctity were soon the talk of the town. At last the princess heard of him, and she said to her attendants: 'I, too, must go and salaam those two holy men.' So she set out with her three hundred and sixty damsels, half of whom walked before her and half of them behind her, and thus in grand procession they came to the gateway. But the vizier's son said: 'Only one at a time can be permitted to visit the holy fakeer, for that is the custom of his order.' So the ladies filed in and out one by one, until at last the princess rose and said: 'Now I will enter also, but do you, my maidens, await my coming.'

Now, in the courtyard there always stood, saddled and

bridled and ready for the start, two swift coursers. When, therefore, the princess entered the house, the vizier's son instantly closed the door. At the same moment the prince



sprang to his saddle, and when the princess had been thrown into his arms, he set spurs to his steed, and issuing from the opposite gate, he galloped away with his prize. Instantly also his friend mounted and followed, and they rode and rode until they arrived in all safety at their own palace, where the prince and princess were married in great state and ceremony, after which they spent many a happy hour together in mutual happiness and delight.



PART III.



NOW, in course of time the king of that country waxed very old and resigned his kingdom to his son, who thus became king in his stead. There was a certain servant then living at court who possessed a flower of remarkable beauty, growing in an earthen jar, and every morning he used to come and gaze at it. This circumstance was reported to the young king, who, hearing that the flower was such as no one else in the world possessed, sent for his servant, and said to him: 'Let me see the flower which you



gaze at every morning.' No sooner had he seen it and examined it, than he said: 'I admire this flower of yours, therefore let me have it.'

'I cannot part with my flower,' answered the servant. 'You may take my life and welcome, but not the flower.'

'But why not?' returned the king. 'I offer you a price

for it, which will be useful to you, and what can you want with a flower which is fit only for a king's palace ?

'Yet my flower I cannot give,' replied the man.

'But why cannot you give it?' asked the king. 'You surely must have some secret reason for answering me thus.'

'This flower,' said the servant, 'was given to me by my wife the night before I left her. "Keep this flower by you," said she : "when it is blooming thus, know that I am true to you ; if it droops, then you may be sure that I am false."'

'But has it ever bloomed thus?' asked the king.

'It has,' answered the guard.

'If you possess such a treasure,' said the king, 'why do you not return home ?'

'I did a foolish thing,' replied he, 'on account of which I had to leave my home. But now I begin to think I must go back again.'

'What foolish act was it?' said the king.

'What can I say?' answered the servant : 'I am ashamed to speak of it. When I was in my father's house, and well off, my father was a merchant, and he used to trade. And when I grew up he chose a match for me, but I said I did not wish to marry.'

'But what objection had you against marrying?' inquired the king.

'I will tell you,' said he, 'the whole story from the beginning. When I was a boy my father kept a servant who used always to be with me, and of whom I became very fond. One day it happened that the king of that country heard that a famous dancing girl had arrived in the town, and he said : "Let her come and dance before me." So she went as she was ordered, and my servant and I also went there to see her. Numbers of people were standing and looking, and we stood and looked too. When the dancing girl approached us, she glanced at my servant and at once fell to the ground. Then said the king : "Why have you fallen?" and she answered : "I have a pain in my chest." And the king said : "Had you ever this pain before?" Then the woman pointed her finger at my servant, and said : "If you have that man killed my pain will go."

'The king at once ordered his arrest, and he was seized by the guards, but my servant said: "It is not the custom of kings to kill the innocent." The king answered: "Even



now you know well you have committed something amiss. Owing to some fault of yours this dancing girl has fallen, and who knows but that she may die?" The servant replied: "O king, tell this dancing girl to give up to me that which belongs to me, and then you may do with me even as you please." The king turned to the girl, and said: "This man is to die; nevertheless, get up and speak to him." When she arose, she said to my servant: "What do you want to say to me?"

"Give me up," answered he, "what you have of mine."

"I have not anything of yours," said she.

"Very well," replied my man, "with words say to me, if you can, that you have restored to me that which you had of me." And the woman said: "Whatever I took from you I have given you back." The moment she uttered these words she fell back dead. Then cried the king: "I'll hang you, you villain! unless you tell me what that was which you gave to her, and which she has given you back again—the whole story." Then my servant told the king, and I sat down by his side, and he said: "Once we were all merchants well-to-

do, and I was married to this woman, who has since become a dancing girl. We both loved each other dearly, and one day she said to me : ' If I died, how much would you sorrow for me ? ' I replied : ' If you died I should be wretched, but if I died what would your sorrow be for me ? ' ' If you died,' cried she, ' I would make me a little cabin at your grave and



never, never leave it.' Then said I : ' And I would do the same by you.'

"After a time it so happened that my wife died. When she was buried, I ran up a little hut by her grave, gave away all my goods to the poor, and lived by her grave. I, in short, turned fakeer, begging my bread, and spending my nights and days at her sepulchre.

"One day a wandering fakeer chanced that way, and as he passed the hut he said : ' Why have you come to live in the wilds among the graves ? ' I told him the whole story ; and when the fakeer heard it, he said : ' As you have done this thing out of pure love, I tell you that, if you consent to give up to her half the remaining years of your life, this woman will rise again, and the day of your death will also be the day of hers.'

" ' Very well,' I answered. ' I give up to her one half my remaining life.'

“Then the fakeer by a miracle brought back my dead wife to life, and there she stood before me. To meet again like that I was glad, and so also was she; but as I had given away all my substance in charity, we set out for another



town. After travelling for some days, we came to a certain river, and there on the bank, when I had taken some bread and water, I began to feel sleepy. As my head happened to be low, my wife sat up and laid my head in her lap, and I slept. I can just remember that action of hers before I dropped off, but afterwards she abandoned me, and when I awoke I looked for her in vain. Seeing no one there, I continued travelling, and at last I arrived at this city, and I obtained some employment from the father of this youth now sitting by my side. This morning the lad said to me: ‘Come along; a new dancing girl is to dance before the king: let us go there!’ And so I came with him; but as soon as I came I recognised my lost wife; and when she looked at me, from disgrace and shame of mind she fell, and so she asked for my death, being afraid of me. You, O king, then gave the order for my death; but everyone loves life, and therefore I asked her if she would give me back that which she had taken from me, and she answered:

'I have taken nothing.' So I said: 'Only say with your mouth these words, *I have given you back what I took from you*, and I am satisfied.' And she said it, and died once more."

'When the king heard this story he was amazed, and gave my servant his life, and let him go. But as for me, having also heard these dismal things, I felt that it would be far better not to be married than to be married; and so, when my father wished me to marry, I refused. My father, however, was not to be gainsaid, and he said, "If I do not have you marry, the world will reproach me, saying, 'See that merchant, who is not able to find a wife for his son!' Tell me then," continued he, "what is the matter with you?" So I told my father I was well enough in both mind and body, but that I could only marry a woman who would allow me every morning to strike her five times with a shoe, and this I said in order that no one might consent to have



anything to do with me. My father, however, undertook to find such a girl, but he did not succeed, because all his endeavours were rendered futile by my absurd condition.

'Time passed, and at last my father went to a certain merchant, and told him he was anxious to marry his son.

"I have a daughter," answered the merchant, "who would suit your son; but she declares she must have a look at him first with her own eyes."

"But, my son," said my father, "will only marry the woman who will patiently allow him to smite her five times every morning with a shoe."

"I cannot assure myself of that," replied the merchant; "but I will speak to my daughter and let you know."

'When he went home he described the proposed match to the girl, who at once said: "Yes, I consent. Marry me to that merchant's son;" and so the message was sent that, after twenty days, I might come and marry his daughter. There was a grand wedding, with much spent, and on the day of the wedding my father gave me a separate house and servants, and in the morning I said to my wife: "I must now be allowed my stipulation, namely, to beat you five times with a shoe."



'But she begged off, saying: "To-day do not beat me, and to-morrow you may strike me ten times instead."

'The next day I said to her: "You said I might give you ten blows, but let me have my will and give you five."

"Hush!" cried she, "or the guests in the house will hear you. Let me off again to-day, and to-morrow you can give me fifteen."

"The next day I spoke to her again, saying: "To-day I must really give you the five blows."

"My wife then turned on me, and said: "When we were married, whose money was spent, yours or mine?"

"No money of yours," answered I, "nor yet money of mine. Your father paid your expenses, and my father paid mine."

"And our expenses now," said she, "by whom are they paid?"

"They certainly don't come from my earnings," replied I, "but from my father's. As for me, I have earned nothing as yet."

"If that be so," cried she, "what right have you to beat me at all, since you do not contribute a farthing to my maintenance? When you begin to earn wages to keep the house, then you may beat me, but you mustn't beat me before."

"I got so angry that I left the house that minute, and set off to my father's and told him all."

"Give me four thousand rupees," said I, "that I may go out and trade and make a living for myself!"

"So I hired servants, and loaded a ship with merchandise and sailed to a far country and steered up a river, and there I came to a wild desolate place; but still there was a garden in the midst of it, though no village or town could be seen. Then I ordered my men to moor the ship to the bank, but I myself sprang ashore and hastened to the garden to look at it. As soon as I entered I saw a tree covered with fine mangoes, one of which fell to the ground. It was so ripe and so tempting that I took it, and having eaten it, I threw the stone away. Then down came another mango, and as I was eating that the stone which I had thrown away took root and sprang up, a goodly tree, covered also with fruit, which ripened as I stood eating, and presently from this tree too fell down a beautiful mango. So I thought to myself: "This mango I will not eat, but I will take it to the

nearest city, and with this wonder I shall make money and grow rich." So I went on, and coming to a large walled town, I entered the market-place and made a bet.

"Look at this mango," cried I; "I will eat it and let the stone fall. If it grows and bears fruit at once, you will give me four thousand rupees; but if not, then I will pay four thousand rupees to you."

"Agreed!" cried they, gathering around me.

'So I sucked the mango clean, and threw down the stone before them, and at once it grew up and up into a big tree; but, alas! it bore no fruit at all, and I lost my bet and my money. To save myself from arrest, all my remaining servants and all my goods were sold by auction, and, like a beggar unable to move, I sojourned alone in that strange place. Poor and hungry, I grew sorrowful, stupid, sick, and even senseless, for I thought to myself: "I do not know how to beg, and for work I am not fit. How am I to get my bread?" In this distress I went to a fakeer's place, and there I remained. After five or six days the fakeer spoke to me, and said:

"It is time that you should do something for yourself."

'Now, with that fakeer there was then living another wayfarer like myself, who every day used to bring in grass and sell it. This man, having pity on me, took me, and said:

"Come out with me, and I will show you where grass is to be found, and how to cut it. As for me, I cut grass every day, and sell it in the bazaar, and cook my food here."

'This, then, I did, and every day I brought in my bundle, and with my scanty earnings I bought flour and I lodged with the fakeer.

'Now, it happened that my wife, after waiting for some time, determined to seek me. So she dressed herself as a man, turned merchant, freighted a ship, and set sail. Coming up the same river, she at last arrived at the same garden. And having moored alongside, she entered and tarried there just as I did. And when a ripe mango fell at her feet, she took it up and sucked it and threw away the stone; and as she sucked another, up sprang the new mango and bore fruit, ripe and full, and even as she gazed it

dropped one of its mangoes before her eyes. But she was wise where I was not, for she not only took with her the new mango, but also some of the garden earth; and



returning to the ship, she at last arrived at the town in which I was living. But me she never saw, nor did she know I was there; but she made a bet with the same people for four thousand rupees, who, having won before, were eager to win again. Having, therefore, challenged them, she ate the fruit and threw the stone on to the earth, which she had first put down; and at once it shot forth a leaf, then grew into a mighty tree, and bore abundance of fruit, and the fruit began to fall. Thus my wife won the four thousand rupees. Then she came into the bazaar just as I arrived there with my bundle of grass on my head, and, looking at me, she said :

“How much do you want for that bundle of grass?”

“Two annas,” answered I.

“Take three,” said she, “and carry the grass to my camp at the river-side.”

So I followed her to the river, and she paid me the three annas. As I was going away, she said :

“If anyone offered you work, would you take service?”

"Yes," answered I, "why not? I do not like the drudgery of grass-cutting."

"If you will come to me," said she, "I will give you the management of my servants."

I accepted her offer, and she furnished me with all I needed; but she took from me my old clothes, my net and my sickle, and kept them by her.

Then she issued her orders to all her attendants: "Whatsoever this servant orders you will do. He is my



steward, and manager of all my property. Absent or present, I am still represented by him." Then came she to me, and said: "You will remain here with the ship. As for me, I must make a short voyage to-morrow to see a friend, but only for a day; but, whether for a day or more, manage everything in my absence."

So she started, taking with her my old clothes, my net, and my sickle; but I saw her no more that day, nor yet the next.

When ten days had passed and still she returned not, I said to myself: "My master must be dead. He will come no more. I had better sail."

The next day, therefore, I hoisted sail and made down the river, and in due time arrived at my own city. There,

in a certain house of mine, the servants stored all the goods, and I went home to my wife. When I saw her, I said: "I am rich; I come laden with my own earnings; submit, therefore, to our bargain, and let me have my five blows."

"Certainly," answered she, "I will let you; but first sit down a bit."

"No, no," replied I; "I'll dismount from my horse only when you promise submission."

"Nay," said she, "get off and have some food, and then we can talk it over."

"You may talk for ever," said I; "your excuses will not avail. Submit, and I will dismount."

"Then said she: "Wait a little;" and going into the house, she brought out my old grass-cutter's clothes, my net, and my sickle, and held them up before me, and cried: "Have your own way! The horse you are riding is mine;



the clothes you are wearing are mine. Give up my horse and my clothes, and put on your own things, and take your sickle and your net in your hand, and then come, give me five blows with your shoe."

"When I looked at everything, I was covered with confusion, nor did I remain a moment; but, getting down, I handed the bridle to a servant, and went at once to my

father's house, where, in very shame and sorrow, I remained in the dumps for days. At last I considered : " Why do I continue here ? Let me go away ! "

' One day, just as I was preparing to leave, my father surprised me, and, forbidding my departure, took me to my own house where my wife was, and there left me.

" " If you like to live here," said she, " do so—if not, go. But if you go, take this flower with you and keep it. When it is fresh and blooming, as it is now, know that I am true to you ; but if it droop, then be sure that I have ceased to remember you."

' So I took the flower and left my home once more, and came here and took service with the king your father. Therefore it is that I do not like to return, because I said I would have my own way. That is the disgrace which hinders me from going home to my wife.'

When the king had heard the whole story, he was pleased, and doubled his servant's salary, and determined to retain him. Then he spoke to his ministers, and said : ' You see that flower, how beautiful it is ! The lady herself must be beautiful, too. So spare no pains to bring her here.'

' Some women,' answered the vizier, ' are wiser than men.'

' True,' said the king ; ' but old women, gossips and go-betweens, are equal to any enterprise ;' and he ordered his ministers to collect some of these women and to bring them to the court to prove their skill in cunning, deceit and guile.

Numbers of women accordingly assembled, each anxious to surpass the others. Out of these the king chose four, and dividing them into two sets, two and two, he called the first and said : ' Now what can you do ?'

' We have such power,' answered they, ' that if we went into the sky we could bore holes through it.'

Then to the other he said : ' And what can you do ?'

' So great is our craft,' answered they, ' that, if we went into the sky, we could not only bore holes through it, but so patch it up again that you would never know that a single hole had been in it at all.'

Thus the two last were chosen, and the rest dismissed, and then the king and his ministers sent and brought those two old women before them, and said: 'Go to a certain town. There you will find a merchant's wife living alone. Can you entice her and bring her here?'

'Is she not a woman?' answered they. 'Women are so simple that they can be led to do anything. We could make even a dumb animal follow us.'

'Bring her to me, and I will reward you,' said the king. The old crones delighted him, and having given them money for their journey, he sent them away. So they disguised themselves as Mecca pilgrims, and put on rosaries; and coming to the town, they inquired for the house, which was pointed out to them, and they entered and found the lady sitting at her needle. Then they caught hold of her and embraced her, and began crying over her.

'My good women,' said she, 'who are you, and why are you crying?'

'Why, dear me!' answered they, 'we knew you as a child. You do not remember us, but your mother was our own



sister, and you are our niece. You were quite an infant when we two went to Mecca, and there we have been ever

since ; and now that we have at last come back, hearing that you were here, we have called to see you.'

Then thought she to herself: 'It is late, and I must get my aunts some food.' So she told her slave-girl to go to the bazaar and buy a pound of flour, a pound of sugar, a pound of melted butter, and some bhung.* With these ingredients she made the women a nice dish, and they all partook of it, and began to tell the truth, until at last they sank into a deep stupor. With the same food she fed them day by day, and there they remained overcome with slumber and forgetfulness.



Meanwhile, the king was growing impatient, waiting in vain as the days passed and the women never returned. So he called his ministers, and said: 'Those women have been detained in that country; send, therefore, some cunning rogues to look for them, and see if they are at the lady's house, or where they are.'

Two great villains were accordingly sought for and found, and when they had approved themselves they were at once despatched. 'Not only,' said they, 'shall we bring back the two women in a twinkling, but we shall bring back the lady as well!' So they set out, being disguised as respectable

* Hempseed—extremely stupefying.

fakeers; and finding the house, they went there and began praising, saying: 'Ah, child, behold in us your uncles. We have not seen you for many years, because we have been travelling over many lands. And now at last we have come to see you.'

'You did well,' said she, 'to come and see me.'

So she made them welcome, and the same food which she gave the women she ordered her slave-girl to set before the men, until they also sank into the same condition; and thus they remained, for every four days she repeated the course, and so rendered them helpless and stupid. Not only that, but she shaved the heads of all the four impostors as well, and the beards and moustaches of the men, and covered their faces with lamp-black.

When many days had now passed away, the king called his minister, and said: 'Even those villains have failed to serve us, therefore let us go ourselves.' So to the town they came, and when they knocked at the door the lady sent her slave-girl to ask them who they were.



'I am a vizier,' said the minister, 'and this is a king.'

And the girl told her mistress, who made ready a grand feast of seven courses, and waited on her guests herself, bidding the slave-girl to stand by. With each dish, as she

brought it in, she appeared in a fresh suit, very rich and beautiful, and with different sets of jewellery to match. When the seventh course came in, the king whispered to his minister: 'I heard there was only one merchant's wife, but it seems there are seven, and all alike.'

Overhearing the remark, the lady said: 'O king, what is this you are talking about?'

'What I have said,' answered he, 'it would not be proper for you to hear.'

'Keep nothing secret from me,' said she; 'but speak out frankly, and let me know your thoughts.'

'I said,' replied the king, 'there was but one woman here, yet now there are seven, and all alike.'

'You said well,' returned she. 'There is but one.'

'What!' cried the king, 'I have seen seven, and you say there is only one!'

'Among the seven you have seen,' said she, 'you have not seen the merchant's wife at all—she never comes out.'

'Then who are you,' asked the king—'the merchant's wife or a slave-girl?'

'I am a slave-girl,' said she.

'If you are her slave-girl,' said the king, 'and we give you a message for her, do you think she will attend to it?'

'I think she will,' answered she.

Then the minister put into her hand a large bribe, and said to her: 'Go and persuade your mistress to accompany us back to my palace, and your fortune's made.'

'If you will agree to something which I propose,' said she, 'I think my mistress will go with you very easily. You must pass the night here; but first one of you must go to the bazaar and hire a strong doolie and eight stout bearers for the journey, and bring them here. If you will do this, early in the morning, when the merchant's wife rises, we can catch hold of her and force her into the doolie, and you can carry her off.'

To this both king and minister agreed, and so the doolie and the bearers were brought and introduced into the house.

In the morning the merchant's wife got up, and when

she had administered a double dose of bhung to the two men and the two women, and blackened their heads and their faces afresh, she dressed them up in women's garments, pulled their chuddas well over their faces, and put them all four, drowsy and stupid as they were, into the doolie. She then drew down the curtains, closed them up, and over all she spread a handsome cover; while she warned the bearers that if they uttered a word about the weight they would be well thrashed, but that if, on the contrary, they bore their burden without a murmur their reward would be fourfold.

Thus, then, it was arranged, and the king, mounting his horse, ordered the doolie to be carried away. After a day's march they arrived at his capital, where, by the king's direction, the doolie was carried to an empty wing of the palace and taken inside the enclosure, while a slave-girl was sent to attend to the king's new capture.



Now, as all four were dressed as women and their faces hidden, the slave-girl, when she lifted up the curtains, cried : ' Not one queen has come, but four ! ' Dismissing the bearers, she went to the king and reported to him the arrival of four ranees where only one was expected. So the king went himself to see, and found all four sitting in the position in

which they had been left. Lifting the chuddas of two of them, he fell back in a fright, crying: 'What evil things are these that have come to my house?' and without waiting to examine the others, he dropped their coverings and ran to his minister, to whom he said: 'That merchant's wife has taken us all in dreadfully!'

'Why, what in the name of God,' cried the minister, 'has she done?'

'She has filled the doolie with four evil beasts,' said the king. 'Come and see!'

When the vizier cast an eye on them, he was quite confounded, and, seizing one of them by the ear, he roared: 'Who are you?'

Their stupor was then passing off, and their senses returning, and the creature replied: 'I am that very woman who boasted of her skill.'



Then the minister called for a mirror and showed the hag her own face, and said: 'If you are that very woman, what do you call this?' And in like manner he showed up the whole of them, until one of the women mumbled: 'Of course we are the two princesses, and these men are the two thieves!'

* Referring to a popular tale. See Story LXXXIV.

upon which the king had them all soundly thrashed and sent about their business.

But the king was more in love than ever, and he now said: 'What a wise woman she is! Not only my messengers, but myself and my vizier as well, she outwitted!'

'You will try in vain to entrap her,' said the minister. 'Only one way remains: you must make her husband a councillor, and let him then understand that, if he continues to live apart from his wife, it will be most unbecoming, since the reproach will lie on the king himself.'

So the merchant became a king's councillor, but when his wife was mentioned he demurred. 'My pay is but small,' said he, 'and she is accustomed to luxury.'

But his pay was raised, and when a handsome home had been prepared for him he went to his own city, and said to his wife: 'If you will heed me, I have something to tell you. The wisdom of my father was never mine, and I cannot trade as he can. The king, my master, has given me a good appointment and a fine house, but he orders me to bring you home. So come with me.'

'I am your wife,' answered she. 'You are my master. Whenever you wish me to go I am ready.'

So she went back with her husband, and he and she lodged at the same house. Leaving her there, he went to the king, who was overjoyed. 'You are now one of my ministers,' said he. But to his vizier he said: 'Contrive something. So manage this affair that my man may be despatched on some distant expedition.'

'But even then,' replied the vizier, 'he will still be alive, and able at any time to return. Let him be despatched, therefore, to procure something which has no existence, and ordered not to return until he has found it.'

As they were thinking this over, both the king and the vizier began to laugh. At first they were whispering, but when the king laughed and the vizier laughed, the new minister began to laugh too.

'Why are you laughing?' asked the king of him. 'What have you seen or heard that you should laugh?'

'I have seen nothing,' answered he, 'and I have heard nothing, and I laughed.'

Said the old vizier: 'Laugh at nothing? Since the day I was born I have never seen what nothing is. Be good enough to show me what nothing is.'

'How can I show you nothing?' asked the man. 'Neither have I, since the day of my birth, seen nothing.'

'Nevertheless, nothing you must set out for and find, since the king commands it,' said the vizier.

Evening now came on, and they all went home. And when the vizier saw the king again, he said to him: 'This new minister will never discover nothing—he has entrapped himself; so let us send him to seek it.'

But when he reached his home his wife noticed his downcast looks, and asked the reason. So he told her the story, and said: 'They have ordered me to go forth into the wilds and bring them nothing, and to show it to them.'

'Never mind,' answered his wife. 'Leave the affair in my hands, and I will manage it.' And her husband grew cheerful. 'Now,' said she, 'give immediate orders that all those who go out shooting game shall bring to me the feathers of all the birds they kill, and promise that you will reward them with the weight in money.' Then she directed her husband to send for two masons, who, when they came, constructed two vats in the floors of adjoining chambers. One of these vats she filled with liquid glue, and the other with the quantities of feathers which the hunters and sportsmen had brought in to her.

Meanwhile the husband was attending the court, but his wife had warned him: 'If the king should ask you if you have found nothing, say, "I am not yet sure. I shall learn more about it when I go home."' Scarcely had he entered the presence when both king and minister at once spoke to him, and he answered: 'To-day I have not found it, but I shall make a further report to-morrow.'

'That woman,' said the king aside to his vizier, 'is sure to outwit us with some cunning answer.'

So in the evening he again went home, and his wife counselled him, so that when morning came, and he was

once more before the king and was asked for nothing, he answered: 'Give me a year's leave, and I'll go and bring you nothing: but if I return within a month with nothing, let me still have my year's leave and also my full pay.'

'If in eight days,' said the king, 'you bring me nothing, you shall still have your year's leave.' But the vizier whispered: 'Give him all the leave he may wish, for never will he be able to find nothing.'

So the merchant, promising that he would set out the next day, once more turned his steps towards his home. 'Now,' said his wife, 'have made at once a pair of large brass tongs, with a ring at the end of them, and two sets of bells for the ankles: and in the morning go to the king, and say, - Now I am going: - but go not far, only at midnight be sure to come back to the house, and knock at the door.'

These things, therefore, he did, and at night the king considered within himself: 'Hitherto I have followed the advice of my vizier. Now I shall act for myself. By this time the lady is alone. I will go and visit her.' When he came to the house he found the door bolted, so he knocked, and the lady within cried:

'Who are you?'

'I am the king,' answered he. 'Open the door.'

So she opened it, and the king entered, and she closed the door once more. As they were sitting together on the couch, the husband came, and loudly knocked, and she cried:

'Who's there?'

'Your husband,' answered he.

'You went to look for nothing,' said she. 'How have you returned so soon?'

'I forgot my arms, and I have come back to fetch them,' replied he.

Then the king was in a fright, and he said:

'Hide me somewhere, or he will kill me. Not a soul knows I am here.'

'There is no hiding-place for you,' protested she.

'For the love of God,' pleaded he, 'put me anywhere, and save my life;' and he began to beseech her

'There is a closet here,' said she, 'with a vat in it, but it is full of size.'

The king rushed to the closet; and as he was in haste, he fell at once into the vat; and the glue was in such a state that he was unable, with all his struggles, to get out again.

'For mercy's sake, pull me out!' cried he.

'But where can I put you?' said she.

'I will never forget your goodness,' groaned he, 'if you will but take me out of this mess.'



So she had pity on him, and took him out, and hid him in the room full of feathers, and, as he entered, down he fell, and all the feathers stuck to him like pegs in a caldron. Then she opened the door to her husband, and told him:

'Come along,' said she, 'I have found nothing for you; it is even now in the house. See here! It is neither bird nor man. It is nothing. Tie the bells to its ankles,

and put a rope round its neck, and take a torch and the tongs and lead it to the palace of the king; and as you go, give it a good crack with the tongs occasionally, and so take it to the king's very footstool.'

All this the husband did, never suspecting that the object before him was the king himself. So he led him to the court,

and when he arrived there he cried : ' Vizier, vizier, summon the king; I have brought him nothing !'

The vizier looked out from a balcony, and said :

' Such a thing as this I have never seen since the day I was born ! What is it ?'



' And do you not remember,' answered the merchant, ' how you said that from the day you were born you had never seen nothing ? Look at it now, then. This thing is nothing.'

' I am afraid of this nothing which you have brought,' said the vizier. ' In the morning, when the king attends court, bring it again, and then we shall look at it.'

' Nay, you are the vizier,' answered he, ' and must take charge of it now, as I have had so much trouble in capturing it ; and, besides, it must not escape. If you do not consent, it will be my duty to report the matter to the king.'

So the old vizier called a servant, and had a tent-peg driven into the ground, to which he tied the king by the rope.

After this the merchant returned home, and his wife said to him :

' Did you see the king ?'

' The king was not there,' answered he ; ' but I gave the thing to the minister.'

'You have obeyed orders,' said she, 'and now keep quiet.'

When the king was left alone with his vizier, he called to him, and said: 'Come near to me, and hear what I have to say.' But in a fright the vizier edged further away. 'I am the king,' continued the unhappy being. 'That woman has turned me into nothing.' The vizier would hear no more, but, taking up two stones, he cast them at the evil thing, and went to his house. Seated in his chamber, he began to reflect: 'What thing is this? It speaks like a human being, but has feathers like a bird. It may escape, and do me a mischief.' So he bolted his doors, and went to bed.

The next morning he repaired to the court to report to the king the adventures of the night. But no king could be found, nor could his officers give the slightest tidings of him. Then went the vizier to the place where the king was tied to the peg, and the king cried: 'For God sake, vizier, help me, and restore me to my condition! Even you have forsaken me.'

'But I am afraid of you,' said the vizier, 'for to me you seem to be some evil spirit. In the name of Heaven, how came you into such a misfortune?'

Then the king disclosed the whole story, and the vizier said: 'This must indeed be the king, and no one else, because the king was always keen to go to that woman's house, and she is deep, and will not permit liberties.' So he went to some attendants, and said: 'Prepare a hot bath, then take this thing and cleanse it.' At first they were afraid, but, nevertheless, they obeyed. The glue was of such a nature that the king lost both his hair and his beard. However, when he was cleaned, the vizier had him dressed in his robes and brought to a mirror, and the king was filled with shame at the sight of his beardless face and bald head. But his vizier advised him to put on his turban and to wear a false beard; and so, when he had eaten food and rested, the king appeared once more in his court.

Meanwhile, the woman said to her husband: 'Go now to your duty, and find out whether the king has seen nothing or not.' So he went, and when he saw the king's false beard he said: 'Why, O king, have you put that beard on your face?'

Last night I brought you nothing, even as you commanded me. Have you seen it?' Then thought the king to himself: 'This fellow must be an owl. He put bells on my ankles, and a halter round my neck, and now he wants to know why I have a false beard; and sometimes he gave me a crack with his tongs, and made me dance and set the bells jingling, and cried out: "See how pretty she is; see how pretty she is!" And after all this he wants to know if I have seen nothing!'

Then the man said to the vizier: 'Did you show the king that nothing I brought in last night?'

'Yes,' answered the vizier; 'the king has seen it, and I have seen it.'

So the man claimed his discharge, which the king gave him, and he and his wife went to their own place.

'And will you, O king,' said the old vizier, 'visit that lady again?'

'God forbid!' answered he, holding his ear. 'Never shall I approach her house again. Whoever made that woman, never in the world made any woman like her.'



But, as for the merchant and his wife, those two lived in peace for the rest of their days.



XLVIII.

THE FAMINE AND THE WEAVER.

A GREAT famine was 'once raging in the land, and the villagers died in hundreds. A certain weaver was riding along, and he, seeing the numbers of unburied corpses, and hearing the cries of the survivors, who besought him for a morsel of bread, addressed himself to Heaven, and exclaimed : ' O God, if you have not food enough to give your children, why are you so simple as to bring so many of them into the world ?'



XLIX.

THE TWO WEAVERS AND THE GRASSHOPPERS.

Two weavers took guns, and went out for a day's sport. As they passed through the fields, one of them espied an immense grasshopper sitting on a madâr plant, which, as they approached, flew on to the shoulder of his companion. ' See, see, there he is !' cried he, and, levelling his piece, he shot his friend through the heart.



L.

THE PATHAN AND THE PLUMS.

THERE is a certain small black plum grown in the Hazâra district called the umlôk, which, when dried, looks like a species of black beetle. One day a Pathân stopped in a bazaar and bought some of them, laying them in a corner of his loonghee (turban). As he went along he took out a handful, in which there chanced to be one of these beetles alive, and the little creature, feeling the pressure of the

man's hand, began buzzing and squealing. But the Pathán, determined to be deprived of no portion of his money's worth, said: 'Friend, you may buzz, or, friend, you may squeal, but in the measure you came, and in the measure you'll go.'

Saying which, he clapped the whole handful, plums and beetle together, into his mouth and devoured them.



LI.

SHISHAT KHAN OF LAHORE.



IN the time of the Great Moguls of Delhi, whose Indian Empire included so many vast possessions, there lived a governor at the city of Lahore whose name was Shishat Khan. His reputation was by no means good, for he oppressed the poor people under his rule, and exacted from all classes heavy taxes, while his private life of luxury and pride was a notorious disgrace to his name and to his high office.

Now in Lahore there also lived at that time a certain couple who though poor were respectable. They earned a scanty living by the sale of glass bangles which they hawked about to the houses of the rich. One day they found themselves below the palace of the governor. 'Bangles for sale! Bangles for sale! Who'll buy glass bangles?' cried they. These words were heard by a lady who was sitting at a closed lattice belonging to the apartments of the zenana, and she sent her slave-girl to bid the woman come up and exhibit her wares. The poor woman, who was both young and beautiful, followed the messenger, and presently she was ushered into the presence of the lady herself. But

it happened that Shishat Khan at that very time was sitting there with his three wives, of whom the lady at the lattice was one. He, when the bangle woman had salaamed and sat down on the ground to unfold her bangles, having looked on her beauty with admiring eyes, said to her, 'Is there any-one else with you, or are you alone?'

'My husband is with me,' answered she. 'He is standing in the street below.'

'Call him hither!' said the governor.

'God forbid,' exclaimed the poor woman, putting up her hands, 'that my husband should set foot in the king's zenana!'

'Call the man up!' then said the governor in a voice of authority to the slave-girl, who instantly left the room for the purpose of obeying his orders.

Descending to the gates, the girl summoned the husband to the presence of the governor, and led him through many apartments richly and luxuriously furnished, until at last they came to the door of the principal apartment of all. There the man hesitated.

'So far I have come,' said he, 'but farther I dare not intrude.'

The slave-girl, finding persuasions in vain, passed through the door, and made her report.

'Come in!' cried the governor to the man. 'Come in instantly!'

The poor bangle man then entered into the presence of the governor and of the five assembled women.

'What relation is this woman to you?' asked the governor.

'My lord, she is my wife,' said he.

'Look you,' said Shishat Khan; 'here are my three wives. Choose one of them—which you please—and hand over your wife to me.' This, however, he said, not that he really meant it, but to find an excuse if possible for doing away with the husband of the poor woman on whom he had fixed his fancy. But the bangle seller, putting up his hands in the usual attitude of supplication, said, 'O my lord, my wife is poor, and has to work hard for her living, but these three are ladies!' Then the governor pretended to fly into

a great rage, and, hunting the man out of the palace, took possession of his wife, who, as she loved her husband dearly, was in not less distress than himself.

So the poor man went away bemoaning his fate, but still quite determined to leave no stone unturned to recover his lost wife. He betook himself to the camp outside the city, and told his story to certain of the soldiers. 'This governor,' said he, 'has seized my wife by force and wrong. Can you not rescue her?'

'We cannot help you at present,' said one of the soldiers, 'but go you to the King of Delhi and tell your story to him, or if you are afraid to do that, go to Rawal Pindi, to the house of the great saint Shah Chumchirrāg, and see what he can do for you.'

The bangle seller listened to this advice, but considering that Delhi was too distant, and that he might never be permitted to approach the person of the king, he said, 'I will go to Rawal Pindi,' and that evening he started on the journey. It was not many days before he arrived, and going straight to the squalid hut of the saint, he found him sitting over a little fire, for the weather was cold. The bangle seller put up his hands and began his petition, telling the whole of his story, how that he was a poor man, and that the wicked governor of Lahore had seized his wife, and had retained her in his palace. When he had ended, the old man answered roughly, 'Do you think I have troops at my command to assist you against a governor? You should have taken your petition to the King of Delhi,' and he turned his back and went into his hut.

The bangle man, repelled and disappointed, was turning away, and, indeed, had gone some paces, when the fakeer suddenly cried, 'Wait, wait! Don't go away just yet!' Then the fakeer took out a scrap of paper, and upon it he wrote the following words:

LETTER WRITTEN BY SHAH CHUMCHIRRAG TO SHISHAT KHAN.

Let us eat and let us drink,
Yet of God let us think,
The swing in the end must sever!
What is it though we rise
At a bound to the skies?
We cannot swing on for ever!

All our pomp and all our pride,
Must for aye be laid aside,
The Guest of the Grave enjoys it never.*

'Take this letter,' said the saint, 'to the Governor of Lahore, and your wife will be restored to you.'

Joyfully the poor man received it, and his impatience was such that he would scarcely stop for refreshment. When he reached Lahore he heard that the governor had gone out for a day's hawking, but he went to the palace, and giving the letter into the hands of one of the chief officers, he escaped as quickly as he could to his own house, fearing lest he should be seized and instantly thrown into prison.

When the governor returned home in the evening, he retired as usual to his zenana to enjoy the conversation of his wives. As the moon was shining and the night was fair he was sitting with them on the roof of his house listening to the strains of one hundred hidden musicians, and the wife of the bangle seller, who had never ceased to pine for her husband, was sitting disconsolate at his feet. Just then one of the palace slave-girls entered, and said, 'Here is a letter for your Highness, brought from Rawal Pindi by Kereem the bangle seller.'

'Read it aloud!' said the governor. So the woman, who was very accomplished, as people of her class usually are, read out the letter of Shah Chumchirrāg. When the governor heard it, and as soon as he understood that he was listening to the rebukes of Shah Chumchirrāg, the great prophet of his time, a sudden tremor seized on his whole body, his colour came and went, his eyes started, and, before any assistance could reach him, he fell backwards from the terrace into the courtyard below and broke his neck.

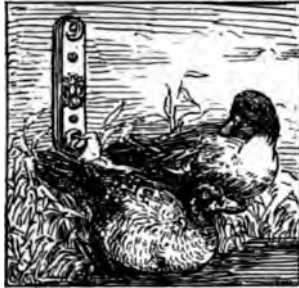
So died Shishat Khan, by the judgment of God, and in the commotion and confusion which instantly succeeded the bangle woman contrived to escape from the palace, and, joining her husband, she and he both set out that night for another town, where they dwelt for the rest of their lives in happiness and security.

* The good man's letter is in verse also in the original.



LIV.

THE NINE-KILLING KHAN.



IN a certain village there once lived a poor weaver, who one day said to his wife: 'I work long and hard, and you feed me with dry bread. Why do you not bake my bread sometimes with a little butter?'

His wife, thus reminded, set to work, and baked her husband some cakes with abundance of melted butter and sugar, and the weaver rested for an hour to enjoy the feast with her.

When he had satisfied his appetite, he wiped his greasy hands on his bare arms and resumed his work; but the sun being warm, and his hands and arms covered with butter, swarms of flies began to gather about him. Irritated by their attacks, he suddenly ran his right hand along his left arm, and killed nine of them at a stroke. 'See,' said he to his wife, 'what havoc I have made at a stroke! From this day forward you must call me Nomâr Khan' (*i.e.*, the nine-killing prince).

'What is the good,' answered his wife, 'of my calling you Nomâr Khan here? Here you are only the village-weaver, and everyone knows it. Nay, let us set out for some other country, where you will not be known at all, and then I will call you Nomâr Khan.'

So the two put together a few trifles for their journey, and left their native village to seek their fortune. After travelling many a league, they at last came to a strange town, where the husband said to the people: 'I have come here to look for employment.'

'And what are you called?' asked they.

'My name,' answered he, 'is Nomâr Khan, the nine-killing prince.'

The news of the arrival of so redoubtable a warrior was

at once carried to the king, who was beyond measure glad, saying to his ministers: 'Conduct this man to my presence. It will be an excellent thing to have such a hero in our service. He will command our armies, and he will slay the man-eating tiger, which is devastating the country.'

So the weaver was introduced into the royal presence, and the king showed him honour and kindness. But the ministers, who were jealous of favour lavished on a stranger, said: 'Your majesty pays this man so much respect that his bravery and worth must indeed be great. Send him, therefore, to attack the band of robbers whom no man has yet captured.'

This advice pleased the king, who at once ordered the weaver to set out on the adventure.

Then the weaver, by no means perplexed, returned to his wife, and said to her: 'I have a grand name, but what will that avail me against those ferocious robbers, who are seven in number? Make me, therefore, some poisoned cakes, and let me capture them by guile.'

The poisoned cakes, seven in all, were accordingly made,



and the weaver took them and started for the mountains; but he took with him no arms of any description.

As he was going along the road the thieves met him in

a body, and they said to each other : ' This fellow has only a bundle. Let us set on him and see what is in it.'

When the bundle was opened, it was found to contain exactly seven cakes, which tallied with their own number, so each of them took one, and sitting down among the rocks, they began to eat them. Having eaten, they drank of some water, which was flowing close by, and then they all lay down and died.

After a bit the weaver got down from the mountain-path on which he had been seized, and came to see what the fellows were about. Finding them dead, he stripped them of their arms and accoutrements and took them into the city and laid them at the feet of the king.

His master, when he saw the valiant weaver laden with the spoils of war, was astonished, and said : ' But where are your own arms ?'

' I heard,' answered the weaver, ' that there were only seven of these rascals. I had, therefore, no necessity to arm at all. If they had numbered ten or twelve, I might possibly have girded on my sword, or, perhaps, have provided myself with a stout stick ; but for seven—never !'

The king now showed greater kindness than ever to his new ally, and made him commander-in-chief of all his forces, a proceeding which incensed his ministers greatly.

After a time tidings were brought in that the king of another country was advancing with a vast army to besiege and capture the city. Troops were at once collected to resist the invader, and the weaver was ordered to lead them forth to battle. Unfortunately he was no rider, having never bestriden a horse in his life. But he was quite equal to the occasion, for, having arrived in front of the enemy, he said to his attendants : ' When I mount my charger, tie my legs down with a stout rope.'

' But, sir,' objected his astonished hearers, ' this is a custom which is never observed either in peace or war. We never tie the legs of our riders.'

' Oh, but I am the Nine-killing Khan !' cried he. ' Whenever I see the enemy, I am perfectly mad to rend them—yea, to devour them ; and no horse in the world can charge fast enough for me ! Therefore, tie down my legs.'

So his legs were bound under his horse's girths, and when the troops charged, he galloped furiously with loose rein towards the ranks of the enemy. Coming to a tree, he laid hold of one of its branches, but so great was his impetus that the whole tree came up by the roots, and the enemy, perceiving it aloft over his head, imagined that he was a giant, or some being of supernatural power; and being seized with a panic, they all threw away their arms and fled dismayed from the field.

The brave Nomâr Khan now returned, and when he had ordered his legs to be untied, he dismounted in the midst of the acclamations of the army. The king was enchanted, and, sending for an elephant, he had him carried back to the city in state; but the jealousy of the ministers increased ever more and more.

News was now brought in that the man-eating tiger had visited a neighbouring village and carried off some of the inhabitants, and the ministers advised that Nomâr Khan should be sent forth to bring in the animal's head.

'Nomâr,' said the king, 'go forth now and capture the tiger!'

The weaver, nothing daunted, first returned to his own house to consult his wife; but as he entered his door he saw the tiger lurking outside.

'Wife!' bellowed he with a loud voice, 'I am now going to kill the tiger!'

'Nay,' said she; 'stay at home. The night is cold and wet.'

'What do I care for the cold or the wet?' cried he. 'I don't care for the wet, and I don't care for the tiger, but I do care for the drip, drip, dripping of the rain from the roof of my house. Tigers? Fiddlesticks!'

The tiger's spirit was so cowed by the valiant words of this famous hero that he stood stock-still with fright, and then slunk away with his tail between his legs and hid himself in an outhouse. Instantly the valiant weaver pulled the door to, put up the chain, and secured it with a padlock, after which his wife and himself went to bed and slept profoundly.

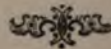
Next day he waited on the king his master, and made his report.

'What arms had you?' inquired the king.

'No arms needed, your highness,' answered Nomâr Khan. 'I merely laid hold of the savage beast by the two ears, threw him over my shoulder, and clapped him into one of my sheds. Therefore let your troops now go down and capture him alive.'

So the king sent his ministers and a regiment of soldiers all armed to the teeth, who fought the tiger, having burned him out, and thus at last the beast was taken, paraded and caged.

The fortunate weaver, invested with more honours than ever, now became the king's favourite companion, and lived in happiness, prosperity and renown all his days.



LV.

THE SILVERSMITH AND HIS MOTHER'S BANGLE.



SILVERSMITHS as a class bear a bad reputation for mixing up an undue quantity of alloy in the silver of their customers.

There was once a silversmith who, in a moment of disinterestedness, promised his mother that he would give her a bangle which should contain nothing but pure silver.

'You are my mother,' said he, 'and I, as your son, who owe you so much, cannot do less.'

So he cast a bangle for his mother out of unmixed silver, and when it was finished he stored it up for her and went to bed. But he was quite unable to get a wink of sleep. He turned from side to side, and moaned and fretted in torment, frequently exclaiming: 'Ah, that wretched bangle! What a simpleton was I to make a bangle without alloy!'

At last he could stand it no longer, so he got up, lighted his lamp, and did not rest until, having melted down the silver once more, he had recast it with a considerable admixture of base metal. Then, with a conscience purged of offence, he returned to his deserted couch, and in an instant he was asleep, while a fat smile of pleasure and contentment betokened the satisfaction of his mind.



LVI.

HOW A WOMAN COULD NOT KEEP A SECRET.



ONCE upon a time there was a certain weaver who became so indigent and poor that he went to a grain-seller and borrowed forty rupees. 'If I do not return within a year,' said he, 'take my house and all it contains—they are yours.'

So the weaver wandered off over the hills, and in a lonely place he saw a light, and going to it, he found there a man sitting on the ground. He sat by his side, but the man spoke never a word. At last the weaver said: 'Why, man, can't you speak? Say something, at least. Do you not see I am a stranger?'

'My fee,' answered the man, 'is twenty rupees. Hand me twenty rupees, and I will speak.'

The weaver counted out twenty rupees and gave them to him, eagerly waiting to see the result. But all the man said was: 'Friend, when four men give you advice, take it.'

Said the weaver to himself: 'I have only twenty rupees left, and if I venture on another question I shall lose that, too!' But a weaver's curiosity is very great, so he counted out his balance, handed it to the man, and said: 'Speak again.'

Then the man spoke a second time, and what he said was this: 'Whatever happens to you—even if you rob, steal, or murder—never breathe a word of it to your wife.'

Soon after the weaver took up his wallet and trudged along until he came to another desolate place, and there he saw four men sitting on the ground round a corpse.

'Whither away?' said they.

'I am going to that village across the river,' answered he.

'Do an act of charity,' said they. 'We were carrying this body to the river. Take it up, as you are going that way, and throw it in for us.'

Immediately they laid the corpse on his bare back and started him off. But as he went along he felt the most horrid pricking across his loins. 'In the name of God,' he cried, 'what is this corpse doing? Are these knives or needles?' He could not stop to lay the corpse down, because it was a fat corpse, and he would never have been able to get it up again. So he went on groaning to the river, dropped it on the bank, and began to examine it. What was his surprise to find fastened round the waist of the corpse numbers of little bags filled with diamonds! He at once pounced on them, threw the corpse into the river, and started for home. Arriving in all safety, he paid off the grain-seller, presenting him as well with five gold mohurs, bought a handsome mare and a nice saddle, hired servants and took to fine clothes, and lived on roast fowl and rice-pudding every day.

In the same village the lumbar-dâr was a man well-to-do in the world, and he, noticing the style in which his humble

friend lived, sent his wife to gossip with the weaver's wife.

'Not long ago,' she began, 'I used to give you cotton to spin for me, and now what a lady you are! However, I am now your friend. Your husband I see has bought a mare and a handsome saddle, and he has a servant to follow him. Where did he get all the money? You might tell *me*.'

'Indeed I don't know,' answered the woman.

That night the wretched weaver had no rest. 'Tell me,' said his wife again and again, 'where you went to, and how you got all that money.'

'No, no,' answered he, 'I can't tell you. The best thing you can do is not to tease me, as, once you know the secret, it will be told everywhere, for women are like sieves.'

The next morning he went out half dead with worry, and when he returned for his food, he found his wife still asleep, and nothing ready. 'Get up, wife,' cried he; 'get up, I want my breakfast.'

'Why should I get up?' said she. 'What kind of husband are you, and what kind of wife do you take me for? You treat me like a child, and tell me nothing.'

'Best for you not to know,' replied he.

'Yes, but tell me,' said she. 'Not a word shall pass my lips.'

'Well,' said he, 'I was told on my travels that if I drank half a pint of mustard-oil in the morning, when I got up, I should see treasure everywhere.'

In the course of the day in came her friend, and the woman laughs and says: 'Oh, I have found out everything, I have found out everything!'

'What is it?—quick, tell me!' said the lumbardâr's wife.

'My husband says,' answered she, 'that when he drinks half a pint of mustard-oil he sees all the treasures buried by the old kings, so I advise you to give your husband and your six children half a pint each, and drink some yourself, and you will see treasure, too.'

The woman at once ran home, bought some mustard-oil, and at night persuades her whole family to drink it, though she took none herself. In the morning she rushes into their

rooms and cries, 'Get up, get up, and look for treasure!' but, alack! she finds them all lying dead and stiff.

Now, when the king heard of this, he called for her, and all she could say was: 'The weaver's wife deceived me, and told me to do it.' But the weaver's wife denied it, saying: 'I never told her. I expect she is carrying on with some low fellow, and, not to be interfered with, she got rid of her husband and children.' So the lumbardâr's wife was hanged, and so ends the story, all the trouble having been caused by a woman who could not keep a secret.



LVII.

THE STORY OF ALI THE MERCHANT AND THE BRAHMIN.



HERE was once a Brahmin who had two sons. But the Brahmin was very old, and his sons were unlettered and ignorant. So the old man began to think: 'My sons are so ignorant that they cannot even recite the creeds and the prayers on which we beggars depend for our daily food. How will they live? Who will give them a morsel of food when I am taken away?' The thought of this preyed on his mind, and gradually rendered him silent and desponding.

One day he was sitting at a shop in the bazaar, brooding over his troubles, when a fakeer came up, and, seeing him so sad and woe-begone, he began to ask him the reason.

'Why are you so deep in thought?' said he.

'For no reason,' said the Brahmin; 'there is nothing the matter.'

'Nay, but there is,' replied the fakeer.

OF ALI THE MERCHANT AND THE BRAHMIN.

ut, where he had two hookahs for all passers to stop and smoke hubble-bubble. Very few passing without giving him alms, and by this was able to provide food for himself and the and he had ample time as well for teaching them rs. Very soon it became apparent to him that of pupils the younger developed far greater intelligence elder brother, so to him the fakeer determined to cate all the secrets and the arts of fakeers, such as ft, magic, and soothsaying, while he taught the elder ch ordinary knowledge as was suitable to poor ns.

a the year was up the fakeer said to the boys : ' Now long with me. Let us go and visit your father.' So t out together, and came and put up in the town the children's father and mother were living. The morning the younger boy asked the fakeer's permission and see his parents, to which the fakeer agreed, and brothers took their way to their old home. When the ger son had greeted his father, who was overjoyed to them both, he whispered to him : ' Remember, father, n you choose between us, you are to choose me.'

i a few minutes the fakeer himself arrived, and said : ahmin, you see I have fulfilled my side of the bargain. w let me choose which of the two I shall have.'

Nay,' said the Brahmin, 'I will choose for you. Take e elder ; the younger is mine.'

But the fakeer would not have this on any account. Say, master,' said he, 'the younger boy I love ; let me have im.' So there arose a dispute between the two men, the ather and the teacher, until at last, after much argument, hey agreed to call in arbitrators to settle their differences.

When the arbitrators had entered the room, the Brahmin addressed them, explained to them all the circumstances of he case, and concluded by saying : ' I have decided to retain ny younger son for myself, but do you judge between us.'

Upon this the neighbours turned to the fakeer and said, It is evident that both the boys are the sons of the Brahmin ; herefore, do you take the elder and be satisfied.' But the

fakeer flew into a rage, and cried : 'The younger is mine ; I will have him or none ! I will have him or none !' Saying this, he instantly left the Brahmin's house, muttering a dreadful revenge.

After a day or two, said the father to his younger son, 'You advised me to choose you, and you I have chosen. But know we are poor and destitute, and you must help us to live.'

'Father,' answered the lad, 'I know something of magic. If you will trust to me, we shall have no lack of money. This very night I will enter the empty house on the opposite



side of the street. You shall see me enter, but you must not follow me till the morning, and then you will find there a bullock tied. Him you must lead out, and sell him for not less than a hundred rupees ; but remember, you are not to part with the headstall, and, above all, beware of the fakeer.'

In the evening the boy entered the empty hut, as he had said, and the next morning it was found that a fine bullock had been brought into the world by his magic.

When the Brahmin had examined him, he untied him and led him by the rope into the market-place for sale.

'What is the price of your bullock?' cried half a dozen voices at once.

'One hundred rupees without the headstall,' answered the Brahmin.

After some discussion a farmer counted out one hundred rupees, and bought the bullock. 'But you must give up the headstall as well,' said the people. The Brahmin, however, refused to part with it, and the purchaser then agreed to buy another.

Then the Brahmin, taking off the headstall, laid it on his shoulder, and turned himself homewards. After a time he missed the headstall from his shoulder. He supposed it to have fallen, but as it was useless to search for it then, he continued his way. Arriving at his house, he said: 'Son, I have sold the bullock, and, see, here are the hundred rupees. But, alas! by some misadventure I have lost the headstall.'

'Don't be distressed, father,' answered the son; 'I was myself the headstall, and you see I have found my way back all right.'



The Brahmin, who had been wretchedly poor, was now rich enough to pay off his debts, and to live in less discomfort. But as the money was not inexhaustible it was soon spent, and then he had to apply to his son once more.

'Always depend on my power,' said the boy, 'and you will never need.'

In a few days he took his father aside, and revealed to him another scheme. 'To-night I shall again go into the empty hut and shut the door. In the morning you will find there a handsome horse. Take him and sell him for not less than one hundred rupees, but remember you are not to part with the bridle, and, above all, beware of the fakeer, who is still lurking somewhere in the village. He is the master of magic, but I am only the pupil.'

Early before sunrise the Brahmin opened the door of the house, and saw before him a beautiful riding-horse bridled. Leading him forth, he mounted on his back, and rode him into the market-place to sell him.

'How much?' cried the people.

'One hundred rupees without the bridle,' said he.

Now, the fakeer himself happened to be one of the crowd assembled about the horse. Laying aside his bag, and retaining his staff, he began to walk round the animal as if to observe its points; and as soon as he saw that the Brahmin was absorbed in making terms with the dealers, he suddenly lifted his staff and struck the horse a violent blow



'I can give you but little,' answered the traveller. 'Why do you not go into the town, where Ali the merchant lives? He is rich, and gives away freely of everything.'

'So I shall,' said the fakeer; 'but, meanwhile, I am begging from you.' The man, thus appealed to, handed to the fakeer a piece of linen, and continued his journey. This linen the fakeer tore into three slips, and climbing the tree once more, he tied up the corpse's head, binding it round over the nostrils with the linen slips, so that the mosquito could not possibly force his way out. Having done this he came down. 'Now I shall visit Ali,' said he. And without more delay to Ali's house he went, and took up a position



with other beggars outside the door. By-and-by Ali the merchant came out and sat down to his prayers. As soon as he appeared the fakeer approached him and put up his joined hands, as beggars always do. 'O Ali,' said he, 'your name and your liberality are spoken of everywhere. From a distant land I have travelled to see you, but just now I want your help, for God's sake, in a matter of importance.'

When Ali had looked at him, and perceived that he was a fakeer, he answered, 'My goods are your goods. If you want a horse, speak; I will give it you, or money or clothes.'

'I want neither horse, nor money, nor yet clothes,' replied the fakeer. 'I only want you to do me a small favour. For God's sake promise me that you will do it.'

'Of course,' said Ali, 'I will oblige you, and it is not necessary for you to invoke the name of God so much. Why do you do it, when you see I do not refuse?'

'Never mind,' said the fakeer, 'come aside and hear my story.'

So the fakeer took simple Ali the merchant apart and said, 'For God's sake, my friend, perform this favour for me. You are a Hindoo, I am a Mussulman. In a certain spot there is a body hanging from a tree. Go yourself, cut it down, and bring it here to me.'

'Oh, what a difficult task you have set me!' cried the merchant. 'I certainly cannot do this thing in the daytime; what would the people say? Still, for your sake, and as I



have passed my word, and because you are a fakeer, I will go at night and bring the body in to you.'

When darkness had set in, Ali mounted his horse and rode out of the town, and when he had arrived at the spot indicated he dismounted and began, in spite of his unwieldy bulk, to climb up the tree. When he got within reach he

cut the rope with a knife which he had been holding between his teeth, and down fell the corpse with a thud. He then descended, thinking to take up the body in order to set it on his horse, and so to carry it back to the town. But, lo! when he got to the ground he was astounded to perceive that the corpse was once more hanging from the same branch. Believing that he had made some mistake, he again swarmed up the tree, and again cut down the body. But precisely the same thing was repeated, for as soon as he had reached the ground the corpse was seen to be still dangling from the bough. A third time he essayed his difficult task, and the third time this extraordinary corpse resumed his position in the tree. Ali now began to feel seriously alarmed. 'There is something wrong here!' cried he. And getting on his horse, he rode swiftly back to the town.

When the fakeer, who had been looking out for him, saw that he had not brought in the body, he began to reproach him.

'What!' said he, 'you could not do for a poor fakeer such a trifling service as that?'

'The blame is not mine,' said the merchant. 'The corpse is bewitched. Every time I cut it down it jumped up again into the tree, and there it is hanging now!'

'Ali!' replied the fakeer, 'if this had been so easy a thing, I should have brought in the corpse myself. But, as you say, there is magic in it! O Ali! to me you are a king, though only a merchant; and a king you shall really be if you will only bring in that body! And now remember my directions. First, do not dismount from your horse; and next, for God's sake, contrive so to manage as that the corpse shall fall on the horse and not on the ground.'

With these instructions, Ali set out again; and coming to the tree, he called upon God, and cut the string. He had so stationed himself that the corpse fell in front of him on the horse's withers. So he settled it evenly, with his stirrup-leathers, and then, uttering a sigh of relief, he started once more for the town.

As he went along, Ali cast his eye over this singular corpse, and began to address it with playful humour: 'Now,

here you are,' said he, 'a dead body, though how long dead I don't know. Pretty tricks, indeed! I wonder how you managed to get up into that tree again and again!'

Hardly had he spoken the words, when the dead body began to quiver and shake and wriggle as if it had ague. Seeing this, Ali seized it, and held on to it with all his strength. But he held on in vain, for the body easily shook itself off the horse, and in another second it was suspended once more from the branch of the tree.



'The devil!' muttered Ali. But he was in no mood to turn back that night, for the sky was dark and murky, and his mind misgave him. So he made the best of his way back to his home.

When the fakeer saw that he had returned a second time without the body, he began to reproach him once more.

'O Ali!' said he, 'what, no body yet? How is this? For God's sake, tell me!'

'Why are you perpetually calling on the name of God?' said Ali peevishly. 'Listen, and judge if I am to blame.'

Then Ali related to the fakeer the whole of his adventure.

'I see how it is,' said the fakeer; 'the body is certainly bewitched. I knew that before; but, Ali, the next time you are not to open your mouth to speak a single word to it on any account whatever.'

The night following Ali again saddled his horse, and rode out to the fatal tree. He acted precisely as on the last occasion, and, with the body balanced in front of him, he began his journey to the town. As he rode along, the body began to mutter and to appeal to soft-hearted Ali's feelings.

'O Ali!' moaned he, 'we all know you to be a great man, wise and prudent, and of excellent judgment. For God's sake, then, halt a moment until I ask you a question!'

So Ali pulled up his horse in the moonlight, for the night was fair, and then the corpse resumed his speech:

'Listen,' said the corpse; 'I'll tell you a story of a frightful tyranny, a piece of consummate cruelty, which has been witnessed in this very country. There is a certain Brahmin. The Brahmin's family consists of four persons:



himself, his wife, his son, and his daughter. What the mother orders, the daughter does not obey; and what the father orders, the son does not obey. In the midst of all this domestic disunion, the daughter grows up and becomes marriageable. Without consulting with his wife, the father goes out to the house of a neighbour, betroths his daughter to a certain youth, and receives for her a hundred rupees. The marriage is fixed for the fifteenth day after the be-

trothal. Having done this, he returns home ; but he keeps the business secret from every member of his family.

'About the same time the mother also goes out, and betroths her daughter to someone else, and she also receives one hundred rupees for her. Then she comes home ; but she also keeps her deed a secret from the rest of her family.

'After a day or two, the son thinks to himself, "It is time now for my sister to be married. I had better go and get her betrothed somewhere." So he goes to the house of one of his friends, and betroths her to an acquaintance, receiving a hundred rupees for her, and fixing the same day for the wedding as his father and mother had chosen. Then he, too, comes home ; but he takes care not to breathe a word of the matter to anyone.

'On the morning of the wedding-day the father gets up, and, going to the bazaar, he buys five rupees' worth of rice and curry-stuffs, which he brings back with him to the house. When his wife sees him entering with such a quantity of food, she asks : "What is all this rice for ?"

"This is our daughter's wedding-day," answers the Brahmin. "The guests will all assemble here this evening, and this rice is for their entertainment."

"Alas!" exclaims the wife ; "something dreadful has happened. I also have betrothed our daughter, and this is the day fixed for the wedding. My friends will also be here this evening."

'She has no sooner spoken these words than the son enters the door, and says : "Why, father, why are all these preparations ?"

"It is your sister's wedding-day," answers his father. "I have betrothed her, and the guests will be here to-night."

"Sir," replies the son, "I also fixed this day as the day of my sister's wedding, and the guests whom I have invited will also be here immediately."

'After hearing these heavy tidings they all sit down in silence and await the issue of events. By-and-by the three grooms and the whole of the three parties of invited guests arrive at the house, and begin to ask for explanations.

'Now, the poor young girl herself knows nothing of these

arrangements. She is playing innocently with some of her companions in the court, when one of them who has overheard the angry expostulations of the guests runs to her and says: "Your father and your mother and your brother have engaged you to three different persons: to-day is your wedding-day, and all those people are the guests."

'The daughter now thinks to herself: "Can this be so? But if I go with the man of my father's choice, my mother and brother will be angry. Neither can I consent to marry any of the others. Let me go and see whether this can be true."

'So she goes to her mother, and learns what fatal mistakes

have been made. Beginning to weep, the poor girl says to herself: "What's to be done now? Better die than survive this disgrace. If I leap from the house-top it will be all over, and my troubles will end." And she mounts the outer steps and throws herself down, but life is extinct before her body reaches the ground. Her playmates, seeing this catastrophe, cry out: "Alas, alas! help! your daughter has



killed herself!" And the whole assembly comes rushing to the spot. But it is too late. The child lies upon the ground with her eyes open, but her spirit has gone for ever. Such is the mournful end of an innocent girl!

'This,' continued the corpse, 'is the tyranny to which I referred as going on in this country. And now, O merchant, answer, what have you to say to it?'

As Ali had been adjured in the name of God, he felt bound to answer. Besides, in his indignation, he had utterly forgotten all about the fakeer.

'My opinion is this,' said he. 'The unhappy girl saved her whole family from well-merited disgrace. That is my reply.'

As soon as the merchant had finished speaking, the corpse began to shake as before, and in another minute it fell, glided rapidly over the earth, and once more it hung itself up in the tree.

By this time it was close upon dawn, and the astonished



Ali, not willing to be seen near so unlucky a spot in the light of day, hastened away home. As soon as he appeared, the fakeer again began to upbraid him. 'Such a trifle it is, O Ali,' said he, 'which I ask of you, and all in the name of God! Have you not accomplished it yet?'

'O fakeer, do not be hard on me,' answered Ali. 'Have I not passed my word? If it cost me my head, that wretched corpse I am determined to bring to you.'

At the close of day, Ali the merchant once more rode forth to try his luck on the bewitched corpse. He arrived at the tree, cut down the body, settled it on the horse, and

set off for the town once more. He had not gone half a mile when the corpse began to wheedle and coax him again. 'O merchant,' said the body, 'you are a great man—who can deny it? Listen to me, for I have something more to tell you of what is going on in this country.

'In the morning her friends bathe the poor girl's dead body, and, laying it on a stretcher, carry it away to the place of burning. The three wedding parties now separate and betake themselves to their homes. Not so the three young men. "Let us all perish with her," cries one, and sadly they join in the funeral procession. When the mourners arrive at the pile the same youth, he to whom the brother had betrothed her, exclaims: "For me life is over. I will ascend too."

"Nay," answer the people, "do not be foolish. A woman might indeed make this sacrifice for a man, but a man should know better."

'Yet when the body is laid on the top of the pile he springs up, and sits him down beside it, wringing his hands. Then



the faggots are lighted, and in an hour this devoted couple are burnt to ashes.

'When this is all over, the youth to whom the girl had been betrothed by the mother collects all the charred bones

together and buries them on the spot. Then he turns fakeer, and, taking up his station there, watches by the bones day after day, and never leaves them, excepting on those rare occasions when he goes into the village to beg for his food.

‘When the third youth, he to whom the father betrothed the child, witnesses all these things, he goes up to the one who is sitting over the bones, and he says to him: “Friend, we all loved the girl; we all had a share in her, for each gave his hundred rupees. The bones of one of us are mingling with her own. You are now the guardian of her dear remains. As for me, I shall also turn fakeer, and for the sake of that bright one I will travel over the whole world.”

‘So he dons the garb of a fakeer, and with a wallet on his back and a staff in his hand, he starts on his travels. After travelling many a weary mile, at last, one day towards evening, he arrives at a village, and sees a woman spinning at the door of a house. To her he goes forward, and says: “O mother, I have here a little flour, bake me some bread!”

‘The woman merely answers, “Oh yes,” and goes on with her spinning.

‘The fakeer, being tired, sits down and waits patiently. At last he speaks again. “Mother,” says he, “the sun is now setting. By this time I could have walked on some three or four miles. Bake me, I pray you, a little bread.”

‘The woman, who was a witch, answered, “Don’t be in a hurry. Your bread shall be baked, and you shall have it immediately.”

‘Saying this, she rises from her spindle, takes a handful of dry grass, puts it in the stove, and on it she drops a little fire. Then she catches up her little girl, who was sleeping on a couch hard by, and puts the child’s feet into the fire, and they begin to burn and burn like dry wood, nor does the child once awake, though the whole of her feet, almost to the knees, consume slowly away. The fakeer looks on with speechless horror, watching the woman baking his bread over that horrible fire.

‘When the bread is quite ready, the woman enters the house and brings out a little vase. Pouring some coloured

liquid from it into a large vessel, she fills it up with water, and, lifting her child, she puts both her legs into the mixture.



Then, snatching her up once more, she lays her as before in the bed, and covers her over with a sheet.

"O fakeer," she cries, "come and eat. Your bread is ready."

"Nay, woman," answered he; "I eat not, I am a fakeer. As for you, you are worse than a cannibal. Such tyranny as this is outrageous!"

"Your eyes beguile you," says she; "this is true bread, fit for fakeers. Come and eat it."

As they are arguing and disputing, the husband with his two sons approaches the spot, and cries in angry tones: "Woman, will you never be quiet? Whenever I come home I find you quarrelling with fakeers. You must be worse than human. You are a devil, and no woman at all!"

He then turns to the fakeer and says: "Eat the bread; eat the bread!"

"No, no!" replies the fakeer. "Never shall I eat bread which has been baked with the feet of a poor child."

"What nonsense, man!" exclaims the husband. "Was it ever heard of that a child's feet could be burnt like that? It is quite impossible."

"But what if I saw it with my own eyes?" says the fakeer. "And what would you say if I prove it to you?"



'With this the fakeer steps forward to the couch and lifts up the sheet which covers the sleeping child. But he starts back astonished still more than before, for the child's feet are whole and well, and there is not a sign of fire upon them.

'Meanwhile the mother comes and rouses the child, who wakes up crying.

"Come and eat bread, child," says the mother; "come and eat bread."

"Don't give me any bread, mother," says she; "O, no, I don't want bread, mother. Give me some dāl."*

'But the fakeer, sitting apart upon the ground, loses himself in reflection, thinking of the wonderful power of the witch. "If I only knew her secret," says he to himself, "I might throw some enchanted water on the bones of my betrothed, and we might marry and be happy still."

'So the fakeer feigns a complaisance which he does not feel, and eats a little bread. He then says: "Oh, mother, have you any old bedstead you can lend me? If so, let me have it, as I am tired and would like to sleep."

'Early in the morning the fakeer rises, takes up his wallet

* Dāl is a vetch largely used for food in India.

and goes out to beg. On his return in the evening, he hands over all his alms to the woman. In short, he takes up his abode with her, and each day he walks as many as ten or fifteen miles to all the villages round, but he never fails on his return to give the woman everything he collects. At last she says to him : " O fakeer, once you scorned to touch my very bread. But now there is nothing which you do not give to me. What is it you really want of me ?"

" All I want," answers he, " is some of your skill in the art of magic. Teach me a little of your knowledge."

' So the woman imparts to him all the knowledge she possesses herself, and he soon acquires it, after which he leaves that country and hastens back to visit his own.

' Four days is the length of the journey from the one country to the other, but his eagerness to visit the grave of his betrothed is such that he accomplishes it in a single day. It happens that when he arrives at the spot the other fakeer is in the village begging. So he digs up the whole of the bones and lays them reverently on the ground, after which he throws over them a sheet, and, sitting down, he keeps reading his magic words, and sprinkling the remains with



his enchanted water. Presently he removes the sheet, and sees lying under it the living forms of his betrothed and of

the other youth who was burnt with her on the funeral pile. At this moment comes back also the other fakeer. And so it happens that they all find themselves sitting side by side at the tomb, the three suitors and the young girl, all four living and breathing face to face, as they lived on the earth before.

‘And now, O merchant,’ concludes the corpse, ‘this is the question which in God’s name I implore you to answer. Of all these three, whom is the girl to marry?’

In spite of his promise the forgetful merchant hastened to give his opinion.

‘My judgment is this,’ said he. ‘The two who were burnt together, the youth and the maiden, having been the same dust, must be regarded as brother and sister now that they are restored to life. Therefore they cannot marry. The suitor who raised the pair from the dead must be viewed as their father, since he was the author of their second birth. Therefore the maiden cannot be married to him. But the third suitor, who merely watched by the bones, must be considered differently. He bears no relationship whatever to these children of resurrection, and to him therefore the girl belongs, and him she must marry.’

Having so delivered himself, Ali the merchant looked for the corpse, but it had slipped down from the horse, and was moving with surprising swiftness over the fields towards the tree, from which in a few minutes it was once more swinging in the wind.

Again the merchant rode on to encounter the disappointed greeting of the fakeer, who met him at the city gates, and cried: ‘O Ali, Ali, lacs and crores of rupees in charity you squander abroad, yet for poor me you will not do this trifling favour.’

‘I was beguiled again into speaking,’ pleaded Ali. ‘Let me try my hand once more.’

‘For the love of God,’ urged the fakeer, ‘speak not a word to the body on any account.’

That night away rode Ali again, and acted precisely as on former occasions, cutting down the corpse and bringing it away on the neck of his horse. And as on former occa-

sions so now, the corpse endeavoured to impose on Ali's simplicity. 'For God's sake,' he implores, 'hear me but this once; listen to the rest of my story, and I promise to go whithersoever you please. All the former part of the adventure I have reported exactly, and you cannot accuse me of perverting the truth. Yet once more will I speak. Only, as the night is warm, undo these bandages, and take from my nostrils the clay which closes them up.'

Ali felt glad when he heard the promise of the corpse, and he had no hesitation in complying with his request. He first untied the bands of linen, and then removed the clay. In a moment the mosquito escaped with a buzz, and, flying to the earth, turned at once into the son of the Brahmin, who walked rapidly away in the direction of the town, to the intense amazement of the bewildered Ali.

'Hullo!' cried he, 'who are you? Hi! stop and say who you are and whence you have come.'

But the boy answered him never a word.

Meanwhile the corpse had fallen heavily to the ground,



where it lay perfectly still. Then the merchant dismounted, and having replaced it once more, he continued his journey, and arrived with it safely at the town.

The fakeer was overjoyed. He advanced to meet the merchant, and helped him to lift down the corpse ; but when he missed the bandages and the clay with which he had secured the mosquito, he turned away and set up a howl. 'Ah, miserable Ali !' cried he. 'What have you done ? You have let my enemy escape me !'

He was not a man, however, to lose time in useless repinings, so he made his way at once to the house of the Brahmin, and, peeping in through a hole in the door, he saw, as he expected, his runaway pupil. He therefore decided to remain in that town a little while longer. When a day or two had elapsed, he sent a request to the boy to come and see him. The boy knew well that all this time he had been withstanding his master, and, as the old influence was still upon him, he said to his father : 'I have been called by my master ; do you also come along with me.' He went, therefore, to the house at which the fakeer was lodging and made his salaams to him. 'Bravo !' cried the fakeer, 'you have done your old master credit. The world used to say that moustaches never grew longer than the beard, but you have proved the old saw to be false. Come, sit down.'

The boy with a smile of triumph sat down by his master, who then said : 'All this time you have outwitted me by mere tricks. If you trick me this time, I promise you something which will be the death of you outright.'

'O, master,' answered the boy, 'let me give you a friendly challenge, and so let us decide who is the better man, you or I. I propose that you turn yourself into a tiger, while I shall turn myself into a goat. If the goat eat the tiger, then the world will see that the pupil has surpassed his master. But if the tiger devour the goat, it will acknowledge the master to be still paramount.'

The fakeer at once agreed to this proposal, but in the boy's mind there existed treachery unsuspected by his master. It was arranged between them that the boy in the form of a goat should be tied outside the town, and that at a certain hour in the evening the tiger should approach the spot and endeavour to carry him off.

Leaving the house of the fakeer, the boy and his father,

the Brahmin, went round to a certain number of the inhabitants and revealed to them that the next evening a large tiger would be prowling about outside a certain part of the town, and that, in order to capture it effectually, it would be necessary for marksmen to be stationed in ambush behind the neighbouring walls. So everyone was on the alert, armed, some with guns, and some with bows and arrows. Then the boy turned himself, as agreed upon, into a goat, and was tied by the Brahmin to a stake near one of



the entrances of the town. Presently a large, full-grown tiger was seen issuing from the jungle and creeping cautiously up the slope in the direction of his prey. Just then one of the concealed marksmen fired, but missed his aim, and the next moment the tiger had leaped upon the goat and had seized it by the neck. An indiscriminate volley was now poured in from all sides, and tiger and goat, both pierced in a score of places, rolled over and over dead upon the ground. And so ends the Story of Ali the Merchant and the Brahmin, or, as it might be named with greater exactness, the Story of the Fakeer and the Brahmin's Son.



LVIII.

THE TWO MISERS.



ONCE upon a time, two misers hobnobbed together to eat their food. One of them had a small vessel of ghee, into which he sparingly and grudgingly dipped his morsels of bread. The other miser, observing this, protested vehemently against such wasteful extravagance. 'Why waste so much ghee?' said he; 'and why do you risk the waste of so much more, seeing that your bread might slip from your fingers, and become totally immersed? Think better of it, and imitate me. I take my vessel of ghee, and hang it just out of reach to a nail in the wall. Then I point at the ghee my scraps of bread, one by one, as I eat, and I assure you I not only enjoy my ghee just as well, but I make no waste.'*

* This anecdote is an instance of the truth of the saying of Solomon: 'There is no new thing under the sun.' Many readers will be reminded of the Irish dish, 'Potatoes and point,' consisting of a large supply of potatoes and of a very limited supply of meat, bacon, or even fish. The potatoes are eaten, but the more solid food is merely pointed at. The following passage from Carlyle's 'Count Cagliostro' refers to this singular custom: 'And so the catastrophe ends by bathing our poor half-dead Recipient first in blood, then after some genuflexions in water; and "serving him a repast composed of roots,"—we grieve to say, mere *potatoes and point*!'

LIX.

THE KING AND THE ROBBERS.*



IN former days it was the delight of kings and princes to disguise themselves and to visit the streets of their cities, both to seek adventures and to learn the habits and opinions of their subjects. One night the famous Sultan Mahmud of Ghuzni dressed himself up, and, assuming the character of a thief, went into the streets. He there fell in with a gang of notorious robbers, and, joining himself to their company, he gave himself out as a desperate villain, saying :

‘If you are thieves, I am a thief too ; so let us go and try our good fortune together.’

They all agreed. ‘Be it so,’ said they ; ‘but before we set out let us compare notes, and see who possesses the strongest point for the business in hand, and let him be our captain.’

‘My strongest point,’ said one, ‘is my hearing. I can distinguish and understand the speech of dogs and of wolves.’

‘Mine,’ said the next, ‘is my hands, with which I am so practised that I can jerk a rope to the tops of the highest houses.’

‘And mine,’ said another, ‘is my strength of arm. I can force my way through any wall, however stoutly built.’

‘My chief point,’ said the fourth, ‘is my sense of smell. Show me a house, and I will reveal to you whether it is rich or poor, whether it is full or empty.’

‘And mine,’ said the fifth robber, ‘is my keenness of eyesight. If I meet a man on the darkest night I can detect him and point him out in the daytime.’

The king now spoke and said : ‘My strong point is my

* The illustrations of this story, as of several others, have been unfortunately lost.

beard. I have only to wag my beard, and a man sentenced to be hanged is released immediately.'

'Then you shall be our captain!' cried all the robbers at once, 'since hanging is the only thing of which we are afraid.'

So the king was unanimously chosen as leader, and away the six confederates started. The house which they agreed to rob that night was the king's palace. When they arrived under the walls a dog suddenly sprang out and began to bark.

'What is he saying?' asked one.

'The dog is saying,' said the robber with the fine ear, 'that the king himself is one of our company.'

'Then the dog lies,' answered the other, 'for that cannot be.'

The robber who was so dexterous with his hands now threw up a rope-ladder, which attached itself to a lofty balcony, and enabled the party to mount to the top of one of the houses.

'Do you smell any money here?' said one to the robber whose scent was his principal boast.

The man went smelling about all over the roof, and at last said: 'This must be some poor widow's quarters, for there is neither gold nor silver in the place. Let us go on.'

The robbers now crept cautiously along the flat tops of the houses until they came to a towering wall, richly carved and painted, and the robber of the keen scent began smelling again. 'Ah!' exclaimed he, 'here we are! This is the king's treasure-house. Ho, Strong-arm, do you break open a way through!'

The robber of the strong arm now proceeded to dislodge the woodwork and the stones, until at last he had pierced the wall, and effected an entrance into the house. The rest of the gang speedily followed, and their search was rewarded by the coffers full of gold which they found there, and which they passed out through the aperture, and carried away. Well laden, they all by common consent hastened to one of their favourite haunts, where the spoil was divided, the king also receiving his share with the rest, while at the

same time he informed himself of the robbers' names and learnt their places of abode. After this, as the night was far advanced, they separated, and the king returned alone to his palace.

The next morning the robbery was discovered and the city cried by the officers of justice. But the king, without a word, went into his audience-chamber, where he took his seat as usual. He then addressed his minister, and told him to send and arrest the robbers. 'Go to such and such a street,' said he, 'in the lower quarter of the city, and there you will find the house. Here are the names of the criminals. Let them be taken before the judge and sentenced, and then produce them here.'

The minister at once left the presence, and taking with him some attendants, he proceeded with all despatch to the street in question, found and arrested the robbers, and took them before the judge. As the evidence of their guilt was conclusive, they made a full confession and implored mercy, but the judge condemned them all to be hanged, and sent them before the king. As soon as they appeared the king looked sternly at them, and demanded what they had to allege in extenuation that their sentence should not be carried out. Then they all began to make excuses, excepting the one whose special gift it was to recognise in the day those whom he had met at night. He, looking fixedly at the king, cried out, to the surprise of his comrades: 'The moment has arrived for the wagging of the beard.'

The king, hearing his words, gravely wagged his beard as a signal that the executioners should retire, and having enjoyed a hearty laugh with his chance acquaintances of the preceding night, he feasted them well, gave them some good advice, and restored them to their liberty.

'The moral of this story,' continued the story-teller, 'is this: The whole world is in darkness. At the last day no faculty, however strong, will avail a man but that which will enable him to discern God Himself.'



LX.

THE PAINTED JACKAL.



A PROWLING jackal once fell into a large vessel full of dye. When he returned home all his astonished friends said: 'What has befallen you?' He answered, with a curl of his tail: 'Was there ever anything in the world so fine as I am? Look at me! Let no one ever presume to call me "jackal" again.'

'What, then, are you to be called?' asked they.

'"'Peacock,"' you will henceforth call me "Peacock,"' replied the jackal, strutting up and down in all the glory of sky-blue.

'But,' said his friends, 'a peacock can spread his tail magnificently. Can you spread your tail?'

'Well, no, I cannot quite do that,' replied the jackal.

'And a peacock,' continued they, 'can make a fine melodious cry. Can you make a fine melodious cry?'

'It must be admitted,' said the pretender, 'that I cannot do that either.'

'Then,' retorted they, 'it is quite evident that if you are not a jackal, neither are you a peacock.' And they drove him out of their company.

LXI.

THE JACKAL AND THE EWE-SHEEP.

ONCE upon a time a certain jackal made a dash at a ewe-sheep, hoping to catch her. The sheep rushed into a half-dry tank, where she stuck in the mud. The jackal, attempting to follow her, stuck in the mud too. Then said the jackal: 'O aunt, this is a bad business!'

'O nephew,' answered she, 'it is by no means so bad as it will be soon, when my master appears. On his shoulder he will carry a sângal (forked stick), and behind him will follow his two dogs, Dabbû and Bholû. One blow with his stick will hit you in two places, and his dogs will drag you out by the haunches. Then, dear nephew, you will know this business is not so bad now as it will be then.'



LXII.

GHOLÂM BÂDSHÂH AND HIS SON MALIK.

THIS STORY IS OF AN EARTHLY KING: THE TRUE KING IS GOD.



HOLÂM BÂDSHÂH had four principal ministers, of whom three were Hindoos and one a Mahomedan. But his son Malik loved only the son of the Mahomedan minister, whose name was Mirza, whom he made his young vizier and with whom he was constantly seen. The three Hindoos, noticing the friendship existing between

Prince Malik and the boy Mirza, became envious and plotted their separation. So they went one day to the king and said: 'O king, your son is always consorting with Mirza Khan, the son of your Mahomedan minister, an

unprincipled young ruffian, and if you should die what would become of your kingdom? Before more mischief ensues let Mirza be banished.' Hearing this, the king sent for his Mahomedan minister, and ordered him under penalty of death to send his son into banishment.

Arriving at his house, the Mahomedan minister began to ponder, 'How shall I do this thing?' and his sadness was such that his son, perceiving it, went to him and with uplifted hands inquired the reason of his grief.

'O son,' said the father, 'I cannot disclose the reason. If I tell you, I am disgraced before you; and if I do not the king's anger will fall on me.'

'I would not wish,' said Mirza, 'that you should be distressed for me. Tell me, therefore, what it is.'

So the father told his son of the enmity of the Hindoo ministers, of the king's anger, and of the king's decree.

'O father,' said Mirza, 'this surely is no such great matter! Let me go and serve some other king.'

So the son, taking costly gifts and servants, left his home. He passed through two kingdoms without stopping, and coming to a third, he rested in a certain town, where he was met by a man who asked him: 'Who are you?' It was one of the officers of the king's bodyguard who thus accosted him, and Mirza told him the story of his misfortunes, ending with the words: 'Give me service with the king.' The officer went at once to the king and made his report, upon which Mirza was summoned to the presence, and going there he took a handsome present and paid his respects. When the king saw his beauty and his stature, he said: 'I have already three viziers, and this handsome youth shall be the fourth.' So Mirza was advanced to great honour, and the king trusted him in everything.

Meanwhile, Prince Malik dreamed a dream. In his sleep he saw a lovely garden, and in the garden walked graceful as a guinea-fowl a beautiful princess in the midst of flowers only less lovely than herself. When he awoke he thought of Mirza, and said: 'Now I have no longer a friend to confide in.' He became melancholy, and from over-thinking and from longing for the lady of the garden of flowers, he

went out of his mind. His father sent everywhere for the best physicians, who physicked him to no purpose. What



good was medicine, when all the time he was sick of love and of pining for his friend? The more the doctors wagged their heads over him the worse the patient became. At last he rent his clothes and wandered away into the wilds, where, in a foreign country, he turned fakeer, begging for a morsel of bread, and suffering so much misery that his very appearance became changed.

Four or five years went by, and Mirza, the absent son of the Mahomedan minister, bethought him of his parents, and sent them a letter in which he said: 'What news have you about my friend, Prince Malik? Does he sometimes think of me?' The letter was duly received, but the father hesitated to disclose to his son the sad story of the prince. On second thoughts, however, he wrote and told him all that had happened. Mirza, on reading the doleful news, cried: 'Alas! with him I was brought up. He is my foster-brother. I must set out and look for him.' So he went to the king and made his petition, and the king gave him leave for three months; 'but,' said he, 'promise to return to me, lest Gholâm Bâdshâh take you again into favour, and you never come back to me more.'

After taking leave Mirza reflected that he must go in dis-

guise, fearing that his former master should discover him and visit him with punishment. So, leaving his attendants to follow with bales of goods and to figure accordingly, he disguised himself as a merchant, mounted a horse, and rode to his own home. Meeting his father and mother, he cautioned them to secrecy, and then inquired for the whereabouts of the prince. His mother was about to tell him, but his father stopped her, told her to keep quiet, and said: 'The king's son is well.' After two or three days, however, Mirza becoming impatient, his mother let out the secret, and he began to take on, saying: 'This is dreadful! From a child I was reared with him. If I am indeed faithful I must go forth and find him.' Then he spoke to his parents, saying: 'My servants are coming on behind. I have told them that I am a merchant; but they are strangers to this country. Take, therefore, my likeness and seal, and when they come give them as tokens to my overseer and receive the goods, after which send him and my retinue back.' Saying this, he got on his horse, and with a few articles and some money he started off to seek his friend.

As he passed out of the city he met a countryman, who asked: 'O horseman, where are you going?'

'The king's son,' answered he, 'was a great friend of mine. He is out of his mind, and I go to look for him. Who knows where I may have to go, and where not?'

'You are going,' said the countryman; 'but do you know what manner of man he is?'

'Yes,' replied Mirza. 'He may have changed, but once I look on his face and figure I shall know him among a thousand.'

Leaving the countryman, and travelling on, he came to a village, and meeting a villager, he questioned him. 'The man for a time was here,' answered he, 'wandering about, and sleeping in the fields, but he has gone, nor has anyone found him or seen him since.'

Mirza searched the place in vain, and he thought to himself, 'Now, where shall I look?' So he went on and on, seeking high and low, until he came to a second village, but no one there knew anything about the matter. Soon after

he passed a Hindoo fakeer, seated in front of his tiny shrine. 'Some fakeers,' said he to himself, 'are hard-hearted and some are soft-hearted.' The fakeer, noticing Mirza's anxious looks, wondered, and asked the reason. 'I am looking for a friend,' answered he, 'who has gone distraught.'

'Oh,' answered the fakeer, 'he stayed with me ten days. Go on to the next town and inquire.'

On he went and inquired at the next town, but he was directed to go still further. So he followed, and came nigh to a large city, and there at the meeting of two roads his friend was lying on the ground. At first he rode by, but turning to ask for tidings, he dismounted. Gazing on his face, he at once recognised him as the son of Gholām Bādshāh. Then the sleeping man awoke, leaped up and embraced him.

The vizier's son now put up his hands, and asked the reason of his grief, and Prince Malik told him his dream. 'In my dream,' said he, 'I saw a beautiful princess, and I awoke; but I had no friend to speak to, and I went mad.'

'Oh,' answered Mirza, 'I know the princess. I know where she is.'

But he lied to the prince, in order to comfort his mind and render him happy. He then got him a bath and procured him suitable clothing, and set him on his own horse, he himself walking on foot before him. So they entered the city, and there they rented a fine house, and bought a second horse. Every morning the two friends rode out into the country, examining everything, and every evening they came back to the house. After some days they took a longer journey than usual, Mirza growing more and more anxious on account of his deceit. After a ride of eighty miles they arrived at another city, where again they rented a handsome house, and there also they made daily expeditions into the country. But Prince Malik was perpetually urging him to go to the princess, while Mirza perpetually excused himself, holding out false hopes. Having journeyed again, they at last came to the capital city of that kingdom, and there, as before, they hired a house.

The next morning the two friends rode out as usual, and by chance they came to a royal garden, in which at that

very moment the princess was walking with sixty attendant maidens. 'This,' cried the prince, 'is the place of my dream, this is the garden of flowers!' By the time they arrived at the door the princess had left, and as they were about to enter they were met by the gardener's wife, who threatened them with a club, saying: 'No man has ever dared to enter this garden, and how dare you?' But Mirza gave her twenty-five rupees and calmed her down, and she admitted them. 'Only,' said she, 'sit not in the princess's seat, nor touch the princess's favourite flowers. Sit on this side, and you may pluck the flowers which grow there.'

After sitting still for some time, Mirza began to ask the gardener's wife all particulars concerning the princess, her times of visiting and departing, her age, her looks, her disposition.

'For some years,' answered the woman, 'she has been in trouble. She frets, and speaks of a king's son named Malik, whom she saw in a dream, and so she does not give me her accustomed presents, nor think of me at all.'



The prince and his friend were delighted, and said to her: 'We shall tarry some time in this city. Let us remain here, and we will pay you well.'

'Outside the walls,' answered the woman, 'there is a pavilion, of which we reserve only a small part. Take your servants and horses and stay there.'

So they gave up their house in the city and lived in the garden pavilion, and to the gardener and his wife they gave from their table day by day.

One morning the woman brought a number of flowers and began to make garlands of them.

'What are you doing?' asked Mirza.

'I take them to the princess, whose heart is broken,' answered she, 'and she takes comfort from their sweetness.'

'This is your doing,' said Mirza to the prince. Then to the woman, 'Bring me a needle and thread, and let me make a necklet, which you can also give to the princess.'

So next day she brought flowers and needles and thread, and put them before him, and from the flowers he made a lady's dress most curiously.

'Does your princess,' said Mirza, 'choose for herself the top flowers of the basket, or those which are beneath?'

'Her maidens,' answered she, 'first take the upper flowers and then the princess keeps those which are beneath.'

Then Mirza wrote a letter on scented gold paper, in which he recounted Prince Malik's misfortunes, and when he had finished it he concealed it in the dress of white roses, and, handing it to the woman, bade her go and deliver her basket to her mistress. This then she did, and, as usual, the maidens took the upper necklets for themselves; but when the Princess Hasan Bâno lifted the dress she was delighted, and said to the gardener's wife, 'Oh, what work is this! What a dainty hand! Who made it?'

The gardener's wife began to feel embarrassed, and so she answered: 'My niece, who is in the service of another queen, came yesterday to see me, and it was she who made this coat of roses.'

Now, as the princess was examining the dress, the letter fell on the floor. Instantly snatching it up, she hid it in her bosom, and going into another room, she read it. All her pain vanished, and she became radiant with delight. Then returning, she rubbed her finger on the dark colour of the wall and marked the gardener's wife's face with it. The woman, who expected money, was angry, and said, 'What a reward for all this trouble!'

'Keep quiet,' said the princess, 'and tell me—did your niece bring horses and baggage with her?'

'Yes,' answered she, 'baggage plenty, and two horses.'

'Bring me the basket,' said the princess.

And when the basket was laid before her, she went and half filled it with gold mohurs, which she covered over with

grain, and giving it to the woman, she said : ' Go ; this is for your niece, who made my coat of roses.' So the gardener's wife put the basket on her head and went away, muttering to herself, ' No present for me—only a smutched face !'

Arriving at the pavilion, she began to complain : ' Reward I have had none, and the princess is angry. All she gave me was this wretched grain. Here, take it and feed your horses with it.' Then she put down her load and began to fume with anger. But Mirza took off the grain, and finding the gold, he gave the old thing a handful, which mollified her. As he handed her the money he noticed the black mark on the woman's face. ' In this,' thought he, ' the princess has sent us a riddle to guess, and the meaning is this, " At present the nights are moonlight ; I cannot meet you until the nights become dark." '

The same evening a slave-girl came in to say : ' When the nights are dark, expect to see me in my place in the garden. Then come and make merry.' Several days passed, and when the moon had waned the same messenger came to say, ' Expect me to-night !' True to her word, the princess came to the garden, and Prince Malik met her, and the two lovers plotted an escape. Everything was entrusted to Mirza. ' So contrive,' said she to him, ' that I may go with the prince, and that yet no disgrace shall attach to my name. Anything rather than that people should say I have gone away with a strange man unwed.'

The next day the same slave-girl came again with the message, ' I have confided in my maidens, and they are eager to see the king's son. So send the prince to the palace and forget not a disguise.' Therefore, Mirza clothed the prince as became his rank, and over all he put a red sheet that he might pass as a woman. When all was ready he advised him thus : ' Attend,' said he, ' and follow my counsel in all things, that you be not arrested and hanged. Enjoy yourself with the Princess Hasan Bâno, but do not drink all the wine she offers. One drop of this liquid will secure her to you for ever. Pledge each other, therefore, changing cups, and when she has succumbed to insensibility take off all her jewels and with your nail make three deep

scratches behind her right ear—remember, her right ear—and so come away.'

The prince started, and at the door he was met by the trusty slave-girl bearing a purdah, or disguise, but when she saw him already disguised she did not use it. So the prince entered the zenana, and all the girls came about him clapping their hands with joy, and they began to dance and be merry. After a time Prince Malik rose to go, but the girls said to their mistress, 'Keep him still with you, the night is long; and as for us, we will retire and rest a little.'

Then the prince asked the princess to pledge him, and she sent for wine, and when the goblets were filled he said, 'Give me a cup with your own hands and accept a cup from me.' But he only sipped, remembering his friend's caution, while she, overjoyed, drank deeply, until at last she sank into insensibility, overcome by the drowsy liquid. As she lay on her cushions the prince took off the whole of her jewels and hid them in his clothing, and then he scratched her to bleeding in three places behind her right ear. This done, he summoned the slave-girl, and said, 'Lead forth!' And having been guided in safety past all the guards, he arrived at the garden-house, where Mirza inquired, 'Is all done correctly?' and he answered, 'All.'

Then said his friend, 'So far, so well; now for more. To-night we must dress in saffron robes and turn fakeers. You are my pupil; I am your priest and master. Let us take tongs in our hands and go and sit in the place where the Hindoos are accustomed to burn their dead, and in the morning I will place in your hand one of the princess's jewels, which you will take to the bazaar and offer in sale.' So to the burning-place they went, and in the morning Mirza gave Prince Malik the jewel and sent him off, saying: 'Go, sell it in the bazaar. And remember in the king's palace there will be a great outcry, for it will be said a thief has entered and robbed the princess. You with this jewel will of course be arrested and arraigned before the king, but say, 'I know nothing whatever. My master-priest sits in the place where the bodies burn. Send and inquire from him.'

Thus the prince did. When he reached the bazaar the sun was risen and he heard a great commotion. Men were beating tom-toms, and criers proclaiming the theft everywhere. The prince, disguised as a fakeer, took the jewel to the very jeweller who had himself supplied it. The moment he saw it, knowing his own work, he seized the supposed thief and conducted him to the king, and the king questioned him. 'Ho, you fakeer,' said he, 'where did you find this jewel?'

'I know nothing,' answered Prince Malik; 'my gûrû gave it to me this morning. He sits in the place where Hindoos burn their dead. Send, O king, to him and inquire.'

Now, kings fear fakeers, so this king turned to his ministers and said: 'Kings have their ways, and fakeers have theirs. Instead of sending to him, I will go myself.'

So the king, followed by his nobles, started to see the



priest. When he arrived at the spot the pretended fakeer, with hands clasped and with a staff under his chin to keep up his head, was gazing fixedly at the sun. The king salaamed him, but the fakeer did not deign to notice him even with a wink of his eye. The king remained standing there for an hour, but still the fakeer gazed as if no king existed.

Now, Prince Malik had sat down near the priest, and by-and-by, when the hour had elapsed, he took down the

support from the chin of his master, who then, gazing round, said to the king: 'And who are you?'

'I am the king,' answered he.

'Nay,' said the fakeer, pointing to the heavens, 'the King is up there. Then what king are you?'

'I am an earthly king,' replied he.

'Ah,' said Mirza, 'say not, as you said at first, "I am the king," but say rather, "I am an earthly king."'

Then said the king: 'O fakeer-master, that jewel of my daughter's, where did you get it?'

'Last evening,' answered he, 'before dark I came and sat here. My pupil sat with me and slept, but I rose to pray. While praying, I perceived fifty or sixty evil spirits in the forms of beautiful young women who assembled together and began to devour the bones of the dead. Enraged, I picked up my three-pronged fork and ran after them. They fled. One of them caught her foot in the folds of her dress and fell, and I struck her with my trident behind the right ear and rendered her insensible. Then I took off her jewels. You have one. Behold the rest!'

Then was the king confused, horrified, and astounded. Instantly he sends his vizier to the palace to see, and the vizier goes, examines, comes back, and reports to the king: 'Your daughter is lying insensible, and behind her ear there are three bloody marks.'

Then, turning to the fakeer, the king said: 'I came not here to disgrace you, but merely to discover the truth. Now I send my guards to take my daughter away to a desert place and to disperse her guilty attendants.'

So the order was given and carried out. But the two pretended fakeers hastened home, assumed their proper dress, mounted their horses, and rode after the princess. She had been abandoned in the midst of the wilderness, and when she awoke from her stupor she looked up and cried: 'Where in the world am I now among all this jungle?' The first persons she saw were Prince Malik and Mirza, for as to her sixty attendants, they had all run away for their lives excepting two. So the prince dismounted and set the princess on his own horse, while he sat behind Mirza and the two slave-girls walked. At last they reached a town, and there they

bought doolies for the princess and her maidens, and started once more for the kingdom of Gholâm Bâdshâh.

But the princess said to Mirza: 'I am as your sister. We are now only a few. Let us enter my husband's country with full retinue. In your hands I leave it.' Thus admonished, Mirza promised to manage, and some marches further on he sold the jewels, and with the money hired an escort of horsemen to accompany them.

When within two marches of the kingdom Prince Malik wrote a letter to his father, saying: 'The cause of all my madness I have now with me, and in two days I shall arrive home safe and well.' This letter changed sorrow into joy, and the king mounted at the head of a guard of honour and set out to meet his son. But Mirza became troubled. 'Your father,' said he to Prince Malik, 'now approaches. It is my duty to pay my homage to him; but if I do, and his anger revive at sight of me, what then?'

'If my father,' answered the prince, 'so much as frown on you I will give my head for you.'

At last the king arrived, and the prince dismounted to kiss his hand. But the king dismounted also, and they fell on each other's necks. But the king did not recognise Mirza, nor did he notice him until the camp had been pitched under his direction, and he was sitting exchanging confidences with his son. Then it was that Prince Malik told him the story of his friend's devotion, which affected the king to tears, so that he sent for him and embraced him as a son, saying: 'My anger exists no more. You are now as dear to me as my own.'

Next day they arrived at the capital, and all the troops and the people turned out to welcome them, and when everything was settled the king called for Mirza and seated him by his side. Then he sent for the three false Hindoos who had plotted against him, and said: 'What now shall be done with these men?'

'Spare my life,' besought Mirza, 'and I will tell you.'

'Speak on,' said the king.

'We have been always taught,' answered Mirza, 'that when a man has wronged us we should try to do him good.'

'But,' said the king, 'what if he do wrong again?'

'Try to do him good,' replied Mirza.

'But he might do wrong a third time,' protested the king.

'Still try to do him good,' again replied Mirza. 'By that time, if he persist, God Himself will punish him.'

After some time Mirza took leave of absence and journeyed to the court of the king who had befriended him in his exile. On his way he met a messenger coming to inquire the reason of his long absence, and with him he continued his march, while his servants brought up the rear with handsome gifts. Arriving at the end of his journey, he waited on the king, who said: 'Why have you been so long away?'

'Kings,' answered Mirza, 'have troubles too. My king sent me into exile, and I came to you. But now my king is kind once more, and I have come all this way back to show that I am grateful to you and to ask for leave for ever.'

So he returned to his old king, Gholâm, and having recounted his adventures, he said: 'O king, you banished me. But I was innocent, as you now see. For the future do not go by hearsay. See for yourself. Use your ears, but not your ears only; use your eyes also.'*



LXIII.

THE QUEEN AND THE GOLDSMITH.



WHEN the kings of the Sassanian line ruled over the East, many hundreds of years ago, there lived a queen who was in love with her goldsmith. It happened one day when the goldsmith was in the queen's apartments that the attendant who was on the watch at the casement cried out: 'Alas! here comes the king!' This news threw the queen into the greatest possible confusion, as

* *Vide ante.*

it was then too late for her lover to escape unobserved. 'What's to be done?' cried she; 'there is not a single outlet for this man to escape, and he will be detected and slain.' Her slave-girl, who was clever and judicious, thought



of a trick which promised success. Taking one of the long handsome mats with which the floor was covered, she rolled up the terrified goldsmith in it, and set it up in a corner of the chamber against the wall. She had scarcely completed her task and resumed her place at the window, when the king entered and began to converse with his consort. But the goldsmith was in such a fright that he could not restrain his trembling, and as he trembled the mat trembled too. Then the slave-girl, to give him confidence and to obviate any dire mishap, sang out aloud:

'Oh, happy bee, inhaling love's sweet breath,
Within the flower,
Love's own enchanted bower,
Oh, why art thou afraid of death?'

The king, startled both by the words and by the unexpected manner in which they were introduced, turned and said: 'What does the girl mean by language so poetical, and yet so mysterious?'

Then answered the slave-girl: 'O king, a little time ago I went into the garden, and I saw a bee enter a flower; but

the flower closed upon it and imprisoned it in its sweet embrace. I see from this casement that the bee is still there, and that its foolish fluttering causes the blossom to tremble on its stem, so I say :

' Oh, foolish bee, bewitched with love's sweet breath,
 Within the flower,
 Love's own delightful bower,
 Ah, why art thou afraid of death ?

The king, marvelling at the girl's ingenuity, resumed his conversation with the queen. But at that very moment



the wife of the wretched goldsmith was seen by the slave-girl to be approaching the palace. She had heard of the unexpected return of the king, and, notwithstanding her husband's infidelity to herself, being in great alarm for his safety, she had come to inquire concerning his fate. As soon as the girl saw her beneath the window, foreseeing a new danger, she sang once more :

' Oh, bee, no need to mourn thy partner's fate !
 When shadows fall
 He'll burst his amorous thrall,
 And join again his lawful mate !

Once more the king, being surprised, turned round and said : ' And what now is the interpretation of this ? ' And

the slave-girl, ever ready, answered him : ' O king, the bee flutters in alarm within the closed doors of the flower. Round and round flies the female bee, but she does not know that when the dews begin to fall the fragrant petals will relax, and that her loved one will escape. And so, to allay her anxiety and to send her comforted away, I sang :

' Oh, murmuring bee,
why quake with
vain alarms ?
At sunset hour
Thy spouse shall
quit the bower,
And seek once more
thy faithful arms !'

' This wisdom,' said the king, ' is wonderful. Where did you learn it ?'

' My wisdom,' replied the girl, ' was acquired by constant intercourse with people of all classes. But you, O king, spend your whole life between your palace and your court of justice. You meet your ministers for a brief moment day by day, and then you return to your zenana. How can your highness expect to learn wisdom, or to understand the ways of men, still less the minds of women ?'

When the king had reflected on these words of the slave-girl, he found that she had spoken only too truly. So, determined to pursue a different policy, he sought counsel with his ministers, to whom he told all that had occurred in the apartments of the queen, and whose advice he required. One of his ministers perceived the true explanation of the case and said, ' O king, there comes a thief to your house.'



'I cannot believe in so dire a calamity,' answered the bewildered monarch. 'But, at least, I am determined not



to return to my palace until the mystery has been solved.'

Then answered the chief vizier, who was by no means anxious that the king should take any more active part in public affairs: 'O king, the slave-girl's statement was probably true, and there is no mystery in the matter. But even if it be otherwise, need the heart of the king be troubled? Have not women from the time of Adam played similar tricks? And has there ever lived a man who could fathom the depths of their cunning? Therefore, O king, be comforted, and live happily and unconcernedly as before.'

To this advice the king assented, deeming it the best, and knowing his vizier to be the most sagacious man in his kingdom.

Meanwhile, as the goldsmith was being unrolled from his narrow enclosure, the queen said to the slave-girl: 'The king my husband is certainly a mere bullock.*'

'If he were a bullock,' answered the girl, 'he would have horns.'

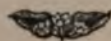
* As we apply the term 'donkey' to a stupid man, so the Panjabis name him a 'bullock.'

'And do you not know,' returned her mistress, 'that there are bullocks without horns?'

And with these words she dismissed the goldsmith in



safety to his home, laughing herself at the strangeness of the adventure.



LXIV.

THE WILD DOG OF PEEHOOR.

ON Mount Peehoor, on the banks of the Indus, there lived a wild dog. This dog, whenever he heard the sound of funeral drums, used to say to himself: 'Ha! there's a funeral, and to-night there will be feasting!' Nor did he ever fail to attend, and he always carried off some spoil. At last the people on either side of the river determined to compass his destruction. So at a given signal one party stationed themselves on the eastern bank, and another party on the western bank, just as night was closing in. Then those who were on the eastern bank struck up their drums, and the wild dog, leaving his lair, made his way to the water and began swimming across. When he was nearly over the

drums ceased, and as he was hesitating in doubt, the drums from the other side began to beat and he turned back. But scarcely had he reached mid-stream again when he sank exhausted and was carried away.



LXV.

THE WEAVER AND THE PRIEST.*



ONCE upon a time the friends of a young weaver betrothed him to a girl of a distant village. After a few days his mother said to him: 'It is time to pay your future father-in-law a visit, but do not go alone: take your best man with you; and, above all things, remember, you are not to grab at the food like some hungry farmer's son, but eat delicately, choosing the smaller bits, and then your new friends will say, "What a well-bred lad you are!"'

Accordingly the youth set out with his friend, and paid his call, but the food with which he was entertained was not bread, but vermicelli. Bearing in mind his mother's advice, he picked up the vermicelli bit by bit, but as fast as he did so the morsels slipped from his fingers again, and he ended the meal as hungry as a tiger, while his friend, deterred by no such scruples, fed himself by handfuls, and fared well.

It was a summer's night, and the sleeping-place reserved for the two guests was the housetop, while the members of the family slept, in accordance with their custom, in the court-yard. After they had all retired to rest, the weaver said to his friend: 'I am starving with hunger.'

'It is night now,' answered his friend. 'What are we to do? I think if you could get down into the house by this chimney-hole you might find something below.'

* For a variant of this story see 'The Four Weavers.'

Now, the hole was very narrow, and they were compelled to enlarge it a bit. Then the best man tied a rope to both his friend's legs, and lowered him like a bucket, head first, down the chimney-hole, nor did he release him when he felt that he had reached the bottom, but held stoutly on. The weaver, with his feet elevated in mid-air, and his elbows on the floor, now began groping about in the dark, and at last he found a large earthen jar containing flour, into which he thrust his head, and he began to eat. When, however, he desired to withdraw his head, he found himself unable with all his struggles to do so, owing to the narrowness of the neck. So, half suffocated, he was compelled to cry out to his friend with might and main, 'Chick, chick.' (Pull, pull !).*

His friend, hearing his sepulchral cries, began to tug at the rope, but found the weight so increased that he pulled in vain. 'One man only I let down,' said he, 'but now there must be two or three;' and he sat down in amazement.

Meanwhile the repeated cries of 'Chick, chick!' roused the whole household without, and all the members of the family began to say to each other, 'Certainly some devil must have entered our house, and his name is Chick.' In the greatest alarm the women cried to the master, 'Go at once to the village and call for help!'

In a short time several of their neighbours came running to the spot, but not a man had the courage to enter the house, while the cries of 'Chick, chick!' with increasing violence continued to assail their ears. At last someone said, 'Send for the priest,' and straightway the priest was summoned.

When the good man heard the mysterious cries of 'Chick, chick!' he turned to the people, and said, 'What have you in there?'

'The house is haunted,' answered they, 'by some evil demon named Chick, and we want you to drive him out.'

'Very well,' answered the priest. 'I will enter the house, but do you arm yourselves with sticks, and stand by the

* The Punjabis say that differences of dialect are to be met with every twelve miles. To these villagers the word 'chick' was possibly unfamiliar.

door. If the evil spirit escape me, and if he make for the door, set on him with your sticks and knock him down.'

All this time the best man was still pulling away at the rope, but he had only succeeded in raising his friend a few feet from the floor, while the poor man's cries grew more and more desperate, as he embraced the vessel with his arms to prevent its weight from breaking his neck.

The priest, going into the room, and perceiving some dark object moving up and down, struck at it with a club with which he had armed himself, and his blow, lighting on the jar, smashed it into numerous pieces, which fell to the ground with a horrible clatter, while the clouds of rising flour covered him all over and filled the whole apartment. Then, while the weaver flew up the chimney, the bewildered man cried, 'Alas, what devil's dust is this, which threatens to choke me?' and in a fright he made a rush for the door. The people, who were on the alert, perceiving a strange figure, its head, face, and hands of a ghastly white, in the act of escaping, laid on it with their sticks and knocked it over.

'Hold, hold!' cried the unfortunate man. 'I am the priest! I am the priest!'

'No, no,' said the neighbours. 'None of your palaver with us. You are a devil, and you know it. Our priest went in one colour, but you come out another;' and they trounced him more heartily than ever, until they had bruised him all over, nor would he have escaped with his life if some of his own friends had not appeared on the spot and rescued him.

'It is the priest indeed,' said they; 'and as for the white colour, it is merely flour. You have half killed him, and you must suffer the consequence.'

The people, who were unfeignedly sorry for their mistake, now explained that they had only followed the orders of the priest himself, and peace being restored, the poor victim of their misapplied zeal was carried off to his house and put to bed.

Meanwhile the weaver and his companion, in fits of suppressed laughter, settled their clothing about them, and without a word to their friends below composed themselves to sleep.

LXVI.

THE JACKAL AND THE FLEAS.



THERE was once a jackal so infested with fleas that life was a burden to him. Determined to be rid of them, he sought for a pool of water, and snatching up a small piece of dry wood in his mouth, he began to enter the water with 'measured steps and slow.' Gradually, as he advanced, the astonished fleas rushed up his legs and took refuge on his back. The rising water again drove them in multitudes from his back to his head, and from his head to his nose, whence they escaped on to the piece of wood, which became perfectly black with them. When the sly jackal perceived the situation of his foes, he suddenly bobbed his head into the water, relinquished the wood, and with a chuckle swam back to the shore, leaving the fleas to their fate.



LXVII.

THE SILLY JACKASS.

A CERTAIN man possessed a donkey which, as it was in extremely bad condition, he sent into the jungle to graze. It happened that close to the spot to which the donkey strayed there was a tiger whose leg had been broken by an elephant, and in attendance on the tiger there was a jackal. 'I am helpless and unable to move,' remarked the tiger to his friend; 'go out and forage, and bring me home some meat.'

Then the jackal went to the donkey, and, addressing him as an old acquaintance, said: 'The grass here is poor and scanty. Follow me, and I will show you good pasturage.'

Now, when the tiger saw the donkey following close on the heels of the jackal, he forgot all about his maimed leg, and attempted a spring, but he fell short, and the donkey galloped away to his old grazing ground.

After a day or two the tiger again said to the jackal: 'Here am I dying of hunger; go forth again, and forage for food.'

'It is entirely your own fault,' retorted the jackal. 'I brought you a donkey, and you foolishly scared him away.' And the two friends came to hard words.

At last the tiger said: 'Well, try once more!'

So the jackal went again to the donkey, but the latter abused and reviled him.

'You cheat,' said he, 'you wretched impostor; like all your tribe, you are cunning and deceitful.'

'Nay, nay,' protested the jackal, with an innocent air, 'you entirely mistake me. What you saw was not really a tiger at all, but merely the appearance of one—a mere shadow. Look at me, how fat I am! If it was really a tiger, why has he not eaten me? However, if you will not come to the good grass, never mind; it is no business of mine, and certainly I don't care; so farewell!'

Then the jackal went off. But he had not gone many yards before the foolish donkey began to follow, and this time he was seized by the hungry tiger and killed.

After eating a part of the carcase, the tiger, oppressed with thirst, drew himself along the ground, and went to a spring to drink water. In his absence the jackal pulled out the donkey's heart, and ate it up. The first thing the tiger did on his return was to search for the heart, but he searched for it in vain. Scowling at the jackal, he cried: 'How dared you eat the heart, which I wanted myself?'

'This donkey,' coolly answered the jackal, 'never had any heart.'

'And how will you prove that?' asked the tiger.

'The proof is this,' said the jackal. 'The donkey escaped you once, and yet he came within reach of you again. How could a simpleton like that have had any heart to think at all? He who has once escaped death and risks his life again deserves his fate; and why? Because he has no heart.'*



LXVIII.

THE FRIENDLY RAT.

A RAT met a camel in the forest, and said to him: 'O camel, you ought to make a friend of someone. Make a friend of me, and it will go well with you.'

'Pooh, pooh!' answered the camel. 'What possible use can you be to one like me?' And he raised his head aloft, and began eating the leaves of a thorny plum-tree.

When he desired to pass on, he found that his nose-string had caught in a branch, and that no effort of his could detach it. Seeing this, the rat exclaimed to him: 'O camel, you should have listened to good advice and accepted my offer. Behold the proof!' And running nimbly up the tree, he nibbled the string asunder, and relieved the camel from his difficulty. 'And now,' said the rat, 'remember, I am your friend. If you are ever in trouble, appeal to me.'

Some time after this the king with his army was passing through those parts, and the camel was seized by some of his attendants.

* The heart among the Punjabis being the seat of reason.

'Whose camel are you?' said they.

'I belong to a rat,' answered he.

'Nonsense!' said they; 'rats don't own camels;' and they led him away. Then the rat went to the king and complained, but the king laughed at him and bade him begone. Upon this the whole of the rats of the jungle assembled together, and, having visited the camp of the king by night, they gnawed to pieces the saddle-girths of all his horses and cattle, so that on the morrow when he met his enemies in battle he sustained a severe defeat and was taken prisoner, while the camel, making his escape in the confusion, returned with his old friend to the jungle.



LXIX.

THE STUBBORN NATURE OF THE AFGHANS.



A PATHÂN was one day sitting in a ferry boat which was moored to the bank of the Indus. His tulwâr, or sword, lay by his side. Presently down came a countryman driving a donkey, and requesting to be ferried across the river. The

donkey, however, having come to the boat, refused to enter, utterly regardless of entreaties, threats, and blows. Suddenly the Pathân sprang from his seat, seized his tulwâr, and at a blow smote off the donkey's head. 'To a Pathân,' cried he, 'this stubborn pride is permissible; but to a jackass—never!'



LXX.

A STORY OF A BARBER.

ONCE upon a time a barber and a farmer found themselves in company, travelling together to visit a common acquaintance who lived at a distant village. The barber was moon-blind; his sight during the day was perfect, but at night he was quite unable to see anything. It happened that his companion, the farmer, suffered from exactly the same defect of vision, but neither of them knew of the other's infirmity. They were both welcomed by their friend, who, after the custom of the country, brought out a low bed for them to sit upon in the enclosed space in front of his house. 'Rest here,' said he: 'I will go in and bake some bread, and call you when it is ready.'

As they were waiting darkness came on, and the farmer, lifting a hookah from the ground, began to say to himself: 'I should like to have a smoke, but I am moon-blind, and cannot find my way to a light. If the barber now were to ask me to bring fire, and I refused, he would think me a funny, churlish sort of fellow. I had better ask him to go.'

So he filled the bowl, and, handing it to the barber, said: 'Here, take the hookah, and fetch a little fire in it.'

Now, the barber was also ashamed to confess that he was moon-blind too. He therefore took the hookah, and rose to look for some fire. It happened that, instead of going in the direction of his friend's house, he passed through a doorway into an adjoining yard, and, not seeing where he was going, he fell over a bullock which was lying on the ground quietly chewing the cud. The owner at once cried out:

'Hi, sir! what are you rolling over my bullock for? Are you blind?'

'No,' answered the ready barber, 'I am not blind, but I have been having an argument with a friend of mine as to the age of your bullock; and as we could not agree, I said I would go and find out the bullock's age by a touch.'

'What opinion did you give?' inquired the owner.

'I,' replied the barber, 'said your bullock was young, but he said no, your bullock was old.'

'You are right,' said the owner; 'the bullock is young.'

The barber now ventured to ask for a little fire, which the man brought out for him, and placed in the bowl of his hookah. His next difficulty, however, was how to find his way back, as he had no idea on which side of him the doorway lay. Not to be outdone, he cried out to the farmer: 'Well, friend, is the bullock young or old?' The farmer, who on the other side of the wall had been a puzzled listener to the conversation, answered in as loud a tone: 'The bullock is young. As you are a barber, you, of course, were right.' And so the barber, guided by the direction of the voice, made his way successfully to the doorway, and passed back without further mishap.

Meanwhile, however, the farmer had been considering: 'Surely the barber must be moon-blind too, to have gone headlong over a bullock!' So, as the barber was handing him the lighted hookah, he remarked: 'I suffer from the moon-blindness. Do you too? If so, why did you not say so, and we might have sent someone else for the fire?' But before the barber could answer, their friend came and called them to their food, and having all three eaten their supper, they went to sleep.

The next morning a certain woman, hearing that the barber had arrived, brought to him her sick child and said: 'My child has boils.'

'I will bleed him for you,' answered the barber. But he used his lancet so clumsily that he pierced the child's body, and the entrails protruded. Seeing this, the mother began to cry, and the people seized the barber and charged him before the king with murder. 'This is unfortunate.'

thought the barber. 'I must see if I cannot get off. Meanwhile he was ushered into the king's presence.

'How did you manage to kill this child?' asked the king.

'Spare my life,' answered he, 'and I will tell you.'

'Be it so,' replied the king.

The barber then said: 'It was the fault of the woman herself for having borne a thin-skinned child. If she had borne a child with a sufficiently thick skin the knife would never have pierced it and the child would never have died.'

Hearing this, the king laughed and let the man off, and so he returned in safety to his own home.



LXXI.

THE ADVENTURES OF ROOP AND BUSSUNT,* THE TWO SONS OF RAJAH BUNCE.



ONCE upon a time two swallows built their nest in the rafters of a veranda in one of the palaces of Rajah Bunce. This veranda was a cool and pleasant place, with an agreeable prospect of plain and river, and Rajah Bunce came often there to rest. One day he noticed two swallows which flew into the veranda several times, bringing food for their young ones. Being curious to learn their habits, he continued to watch them day after day. One evening he noticed that though both birds had flown forth for food, only the male bird returned. The next day he looked again, hoping to see both the birds, but the young ones were again fed by the male bird only. Surprised at this, he issued an order: 'If anyone in the city has caught a swallow he is to let it go immediately.'

* The accent in 'Bussunt' is on the second syllable.

In a short time a falconer came and reported that he had caught a hen-swallow. 'Then let it go,' said the king.

'But, sir,' answered the falconer, 'I gave the bird to my hawk.'

'Ah, cruel one!' said the king, 'you have killed the mother of a brood of poor young birds.'

The falconer excused himself, saying: 'I was not aware she had young,' and the king sent him away.

For several days after this the king was pleased to notice that the male bird, though deprived of his mate, was unremitting in his care of his offspring, and he hoped that all would yet be well with them. On a certain morning, however, when the swallow flew back with food as usual, he came accompanied by another mate, which seemed so remarkable a circumstance that it set the king thinking. 'Is this the real mother,' thought he, 'or is it another? Perhaps it is the very one herself.' Then the king's heart felt glad, and he continued to watch. The next morning the two birds came in together again, but instead of coming and going many times, as before, they visited the nest only once during the whole day. Another day passed, and the king found that the hen-bird came alone, but that the cock-bird never appeared at all. 'Can anything have happened to the cock-bird?' then said he to himself. 'Has he been caught too?' So he issued a second order: 'Whosoever has caught a swallow, be it male or female, he is to let it escape.' But his vizier brought answer back: 'No one has caught any swallow whatever.' Then King Bunce returned to his palace veranda and began to consider this: 'Both birds brought in food yesterday, and to-day the hen-bird only appeared. How is this? Where could the cock-bird have been?' Looking up towards the nest, he was surprised to notice an unusual silence. 'Can the young ones be sleeping?' said he to himself. So he called for a ladder, and mounting, he put his hand into the nest, and found that all the four young birds were dead. 'Ah,' said the king, 'some snake must have come and drawn their breath away!' But when he began to examine them he found a little thorn sticking in

the throat of every one of them, which had deprived them of life. He now concluded that the second hen-bird was a stepmother, and that she had purposely given the young ones thorns instead of worms in order to destroy them.

Now, Rajah Bunce had two sons named Roop and Bussunt, and as he considered the fate of the poor fledglings he thought to himself: 'If my queen were to die and I were to marry again, my new wife would treat my sons cruelly too. If a silly bird can be so wicked, what might not be expected from a designing woman?'

As fate would have it, it happened after some time that the queen, the mother of the two boys, died and was buried. The king mourned for her, and the whole of his court mourned for her too, both because she was young and beautiful and on account of all her endearing qualities. Many months elapsed, and as the affairs of the kingdom were suffering neglect owing to the king's continued sorrow, his ministers all assembled together and advised him to marry again.

'No,' answered the king. 'I have learnt a lesson from the birds of the air; I have seen what atrocities even the stepmothers of swallows can commit.'

Again and again his vizier and his other ministers begged him to marry again, and their words prevailed, so that at last, as it is easier to gratify men than to please God, he gave his consent. So proposals of marriage were made to the daughter of a neighbouring king, and in due course of time the bride was brought home, and lodged in a splendid palace of her own.

Time passed, and the two boys went to school together, and learnt their lessons day by day in the classes of learned pundits, where many others used to come too, to win wisdom and knowledge out of ancient books. This was the golden period of their lives, and they were happy in the innocence of their boyhood and in the full measure of their father's love.

The queen, however, entertained for these two young princes sentiments of a far different description. She was their stepmother, and she possessed all a stepmother's

feelings towards the children of her predecessor. One day, when the two brothers had returned from school as usual, they were amusing themselves with some tumbler-pigeons in the court of the palace. The younger brother threw his pigeon high into the air, and it alighted on the terrace of the queen's apartments, on which she was then pacing backwards and forwards. Seizing the bird, she at once put it under a basket and hid it, and sat, and looked as if nothing had happened. The boy, who was strong and active, climbed up the terrace, and seeing his stepmother, he said: 'Mother, have you seen my pigeon?' The queen answered, 'No.' The boy looked doubtfully at her, and just then an old nurse, who had tended both the princes in their infancy, and who was a favourite of the former queen, made signs to him that the pigeon was hidden under the basket. He reached the basket at a bound and rescued the pigeon, which he took away with him, while the discomfited queen retired in anger to her chamber. Coming down again to the court, he told his brother: 'My pigeon flew on to the terrace, and the queen hid it, and but for the nurse I should never have recovered it.'

A few days passed, and the same accident occurred again. The pigeon lighted on the terrace and was hidden by the queen. Then said the younger brother to the elder: 'It is your turn now. Do you go up and bring the pigeon back.'

Up climbed the elder brother as quickly as possible, and when he arrived at the top he looked all round for the pigeon, but it was nowhere to be seen. Feeling certain that the queen, who was sitting by her chamber-door, had hidden it, he went towards the basket, but as he approached the queen caught hold of him, saying, 'You are not to go there.' As his strength far surpassed hers, he released himself from her hold, and rescued his pigeon. But the queen set up a cry of distress, and began to weep loudly and bitterly. All her maidens came running about her, wondering what had occurred, and then came the king himself, to whom the queen said, 'Either your sons must quit the kingdom, or I must.'

‘What have the princes done?’ inquired the king. ‘And how have they annoyed you?’

‘Yesterday,’ answered she, ‘the younger, Prince Bussunt, and to-day Prince Roop, the elder, scaled the palace-wall, and having insulted me, they would have treated me with violence, but I cried out and they escaped.’

Then was the king filled with sorrow. ‘Ah!’ thought he, ‘that which I feared has befallen me at last.’ Going to his vizier, he said, ‘Do you not see? From the first I foresaw this trouble: my mind misgave me, and as I expected, so has it come to pass, and now either the queen or the princes must leave the palace. I can no longer keep both wife and sons. What am I to do?’

Some of his ministers counselled the king to have pity on the youth of the two princes, and to forgive their offence, but the king, swayed by his wicked wife, was so convinced of their guilt, that no arguments were strong enough to induce him to regard them again with a favourable eye. Then said his vizier, ‘O king, if you banish your children the scandal will not be so great. But if you dismiss your wife evil tongues will remark it, and a bad report will spread abroad in the kingdom.’

Led, therefore, by the advice of his vizier, the king determined on the banishment of Roop and his brother Bussunt. Now, in those days, it was the custom with kings, whenever one of the royal household was to be disgraced and banished, either to place a pair of wooden shoes turned upside down at the door of him who was sentenced to exile, or to order his rooms to be swept out backwards instead of being cleaned in the usual way.

The next day the two boys came home from school, and the elder was chasing the younger, and they were racing towards the court. On reaching the palace, Bussunt, the younger, caught sight of the upturned shoes at the door of their rooms, and he said to his brother, ‘See, brother, the king’s signal! It is our sentence of banishment, and we must leave the country.’

They were brave boys, both of them, and when they entered the house they sat down and conferred together

and made their plans. 'Yes,' said the elder, 'let us go to the stables and choose out a couple of swift horses, and let us see the treasurer and provide ourselves with money, and let us be gone, otherwise the queen will devise our destruction.'

As they agreed, so they acted, and having provided themselves with everything necessary for a long journey, and having armed themselves with their good swords, they set out from the palace without bidding farewell to anyone. On and on they rode over mountain and plain; day succeeded day, and they found themselves astray in a gloomy forest. 'God is in heaven,' said the elder; 'but where are we?' Just then they met a wayfarer, and inquired of him, 'Is there any town or village hereabouts?'

'Yes,' answered the man; 'there is a village close at hand.'

So they continued their journey, but instead of arriving at human abodes they appeared to plunge deeper and deeper into the forest, and evening coming on, they sat down to rest under a great tälli-tree, both wide-spreading and high.

'Either we were misled,' said Bussunt, 'or we have mistaken the traveller's directions.'

'Here let us rest,' answered the elder brother, 'for there is abundance of grass and water. Let us tie up our horses, and watch through the night by turns.'

'True,' said the younger, 'this spot is cool and delicious, and though our food is exhausted, and we are hungry, we can at least lie down and sleep by turns. Let the first watch be mine.'

'Nay,' said the elder, 'you are more fatigued than I am. Brother, you shall rest first.'

'Not so,' returned Bussunt. 'You are the elder, and to rest before me is your right. Therefore, if you really love me, suffer me to mount guard for the first few hours. Oh, let me watch while you sleep and dream of happier days to come!'

Then the two boys picketed their horses, and having washed, they commended themselves to the protection of God in the usual prayers, and while Roop, the elder brother, lay down and slept, the younger watched.

The place was lonely and wild, and the silence of night was broken at times by the cries of wild animals on the quest for prey. To scare them away, Bussunt collected some dry leaves and sticks, and having struck out a spark from his sword-blade, he lighted a fire, and having blown up the glowing embers into a bright blaze, and heaped on more wood, he sat down and began to warm himself, because the air, though still, was cold. He had been thinking over all their misfortunes, longing for his home, and guessing at the uncertain future, when he suddenly heard a strange fluttering of wings in the *talli-tree*. Looking up, he could dimly discern two pearl-eating flamingoes* struggling together among the branches.

'What!' said one of them to the other. 'You, a female, presuming to contend with me! Let me tell you that, if



anyone were this moment to kill me and eat me, to-morrow morning he would be a crowned king.'

'And hear what I have to say, also,' answered the other. 'If you are great, I am great also, for if anyone were to kill and eat me he would become a king's counsellor.'

When Bussunt heard what the birds had to say he

* In Panjâbi—*Hâns*.

wondered greatly, and he thought to himself: 'If now I could so manage as to kill both these birds, I would give the male bird to my brother, and the female I would eat myself.'

He then thought of his God, and, putting two arrows to his bow, he drew it with a steady aim and shot them both. Down fell the two flamingoes at his feet, and picking them up, he plucked them and laid them on the red ashes. Then he turned to his brother and roused him, saying, 'Brother, wake up, God has sent us some food.'

When Roop saw the two birds roasting on the embers, he said: 'One of these fowls is smaller than the other. Let me have the smaller one, since I can bear hunger better than you.'

'No, no,' answered Bussunt. 'You are my big brother, and yours is the larger bird. The smaller one is mine.' And, to prevent mistakes, he took the smaller bird and began to eat it.

When the two princes had finished their supper, the elder said: 'It is your turn now to lie down. Brother, it is midnight; rest, and I will keep watch.'

In the morning they were about betimes, and, having again washed in the stream, they saddled their horses, mounted, and rode on their way.

After going some little distance, the younger brother said: 'Ah, brother, how unfortunate I am! I have forgotten my whip under the tälli-tree, and I shall have now to ride back to fetch it.'

Then said the elder: 'If you will return, I will go on slowly. Make haste, and overtake me.' And the brothers separated, but little did they suspect how long a separation their parting was to prove.

Let us first see what happened to the elder brother.

He rode on, and presently he fell into a reverie, and quite forgot all about Bussunt. Before he was aware of it he found himself approaching the gates of a large well-walled city, where he was surrounded by crowds of eager people all vociferating loudly, and hailing him as their king. 'What means this greeting?' asked Prince Roop of one standing

by his bridle, who by his appearance seemed to be a person of consequence.

'Our king,' answered the vizier, for that was his rank, 'died last night, and it is an unalterable law of this realm



that when the reigning sovereign dies his successor shall be the first strange horseman who comes riding into the town.'

So Roop was escorted by guards of honour to the public place, and thence to a palace of exceeding beauty, where, in the midst of applauding multitudes, he was throned a crowned king. But, as if some strange spell had fallen upon his mind, he never once remembered his younger brother, but forgot him as completely as if he had never existed.

But where was Prince Bussunt?

After parting from Roop, he rode back to the spot where they had spent the night; but as he approached the tree he observed that a deadly snake was lying across his whip, which still remained on the ground where he had left it. 'If I spur my horse into a gallop,' said Bussunt, 'I shall be able to stoop down and pick up the whip as I ride by.' So Prince Bussunt urged his horse forward at a gallop, but it so happened that the snake was on the alert, and just as the lad stooped over to grasp his whip the venomous reptile

drew away his breath and he fell from his horse in a swoon, while his horse also, arrested by the poisonous influence, stood still by his master's side. Then the snake glided rapidly away, and disappeared in the depths of the forest.

For several days Prince Bussunt remained lying unconscious under the tálí-tree. To all appearance he was dead, for he neither breathed nor moved. At last an old beggar-man and his wife happened to pass that way in their journeyings from one country to another. And when they came to the place and saw a handsome boy lying, as they imagined, cold and stiff upon the ground, they began to feel alarmed, and the old man said to his wife: 'Come away, come away, we shall both be hanged; his death will be fastened on us!'

'Stay for one moment,' answered the woman; 'let us see what is the matter.'

'Nay, nay,' said he, 'we shall get into trouble; let us go.'

The woman, however, had her own way, and, having carefully felt and examined the boy, she said: 'No one has shot him, and no one has cut him down, nor is he really dead, but his breath has been drawn out of his body by a snake. If you will not come here and try to restore the lad to life, you and I must now separate. You are a fakeer and a snake-charmer, and all the snakes know you and fear you. Come nigh, therefore, and let us not abandon this beautiful youth to perish in the wilderness.'

Thus entreated, the old beggar-man approached, saying: 'I will do my best. If it is the will of God that he shall live, doubtless he will live.'

Then the old man drew upon the ground his magic lines, and, kneeling down, he began to recite and to pray with intense energy. As he proceeded with his incantations, all the snakes of the forest began to crowd around him, some of them centuries old, others small and young, until he was surrounded by them on all sides. But the snake which had wrought the mischief came not. Then the old beggar-man took four cowrie shells, and, having repeated certain words over them, he sent them flying to the four winds, to the north, to the south, to the east, and to the west, to search

for and to bring back the missing snake. Three of the shells failed in their quest, but the fourth succeeded, and, finding the snake, it compelled him to return. And when the snake appeared, he was seen riding as a king on the back of another snake; but he was proud and disdainful, and when all the other snakes bent their heads to the earth and touched the magic lines, he alone refused to do so.

When the beggar-man saw this, he prayed and prayed and prayed again, until he had subdued the power of the snake, and then he spoke roughly to him and said: 'What tyranny of yours is this? By what right have you stolen the breath of this beautiful boy, and left him to be devoured in the forest?'

'No tyrant am I,' answered the snake; 'but this boy is himself the tyrant, for with his bow and arrows he shot my two flamingoes.'



Then the beggar-man added entreaties to his spells, and prevailed on the snake to relent and to restore the boy to life. And when the snake had breathed into his mouth, Prince Bussunt opened his eyes, and, looking round, he said: 'Oh, what a beautiful sleep I have had! Why have you wakened me?' But the fakeer answered: 'O boy, the sleep which you have had, may God in His mercy never grant

you again!' By degrees the prince remembered all the circumstances which he had forgotten, and the beggar-man explained to him how he had been restored to life. Very grateful he felt when he understood how truly he had been served, and he said: 'O fakeer, my brother is now lost; let me therefore go with you.' But the old man answered: 'It cannot be; you are a king's son, and we are only poor folk. We should be taken up and hanged on account of you. Therefore, wherever you go, we shall not go. We'll have nothing more to do with you.' And the old couple salaamed the prince and went off.

Left to himself, Bussunt determined to mount his horse and to ride on through the forest in the hope that fortune might lead him to his brother, or at least to some village or town. One evening, after the sun had set, he found himself before the walls of the very city in which his brother Roop reigned as king. But the gates were closed and fast barred, and the watchman on the battlements refused to open them. In vain Bussunt pleaded hunger and fatigue.

'Too late,' said the watchman; 'a man-eating tiger infests this neighbourhood, and the king's order is that the gates shall not be opened after sundown. No one can enter now before the morrow.'

Finding entreaties unavailing, Bussunt retired to some ruined huts close by, and, dismounting from his horse, he tied him to a tree, and determined there to spend the night. Scarcely had he closed his weary eyes when he heard the growl of the tiger, and looking out, he saw the beast, close to the door, about to make a spring upon his horse. Said Bussunt to himself: 'You may roar, my friend, but with luck I hope to have your head.'

He had his good sword drawn in his hand, and as the tiger, in the act of springing, flew past the doorway, he smote him with might and main and nearly cut him in two.

This tiger had been the terror of the town for many a year, and one of the decrees made by the late king proclaimed that whoever should bring in his head should marry his daughter and be made governor of the fourth part of the kingdom. It might seem that Bussunt's troubles were now

about to end, and that a life of happiness in the enjoyment of his former rank was about to open to him. But this was far from being the case, because it so happened that the watchman, from his tower, had observed the whole of his proceedings and noted the death of the famous man-eating tiger. 'Ah,' exclaimed this villain to himself, 'to-night my star is in the ascendant, and if I can only get rid of this stranger, and secure the tiger's head, my fortune is made.'

For an hour he remained at his post, but when he felt assured that the prince was fast asleep he stole down from the tower, and cautiously approaching the hut, he entered, sword in hand, and hewed at the unfortunate boy without mercy. Having thus, as he supposed, killed him outright, he took up the unconscious body and, carrying it to a lonely place, threw it among some reeds by the river's side. Then, returning, he hid the horse, and cut off the tiger's head, which he took back with him to his watch-tower, and in the morning, presenting himself at the palace, he displayed his prize and claimed the promised reward. Everyone belauded the courage of the watchman, who suddenly became famous and was regarded by the whole city as a hero. Nor were his supposed merits unrequited, for he was raised to the position of a counsellor of state, he was made governor of a province, and the hand of a lovely princess was bestowed on him in marriage.

Early on the next day a poor washerman loaded his donkey with the clothes of his customers, and, driving him before him through the city gate, went to his usual washing-ground by the river's side. There he heard a most lamentable groaning.

'What can this be?' said he. 'Perhaps the tiger has mauled some wayfarer.' Having searched among the reeds, he found the wounded Bussunt, whose face seemed to him so beautiful that he exclaimed: 'This boy looks like a rose. But oh,' continued he, 'how he has been cut to pieces!'

Finding that life still breathed in him, he raised him gently and placed him on his donkey, and so led him back to the city and took him to his own home.

When his wife saw her husband returning so soon with a

strange youth on the donkey's back, she assailed him with five hundred curses. 'I sent you out to wash the clothes,' said she, 'and here you are back again already.'

'Hush!' answered he. 'Keep still, keep still! God has sent us good fortune.'

And as soon as she saw the state of affairs, and looked at the boy's handsome face and deadly wounds, she also pitied him, and she received him kindly, and took him in, and laid him down, and dressed his wounds, and she tended him so carefully that in a short time he recovered and became quite well again.

But these good people were very poor, and they could not afford to keep a young man in the house idle, nor had he any hope of ever meeting his brother again, for he knew not what had become of him. But as he felt grateful to the worthy couple for all that they had done for him, he offered to serve them in any way they pleased. So the woman taught him sewing and embroidery, and he became so expert with his needle that the king and all the nobles heard of his fame and sent him orders for their robes of state. Little did he think when he was busy toiling as a tailor on some royal garment that he was working at the clothing of his own brother.

So time went on, until at last, as his evil genius would have it, his old enemy, the city watchman, now a governor, came that way and recognised him as he sat over his needle in the washerman's doorway.

'Ah,' said the villain, 'can this be true? I thought I had despatched him, but it seems I was mistaken. I am undone if I do not find means of destroying him. I had better have him stolen and killed without delay.'

Now, it happened at that season that a merchant vessel, which had arrived at the harbour, had become stranded, and though every device was tried to float her again, she still remained embedded in the sand. Despairing of success, the sailors consulted a certain sorcerer, who said: 'The vessel will never move until you offer in sacrifice an only son, who must be slain, and whose blood must be caught and sprinkled on the deck.'

Having received this answer, the sailors went to the king

and stated the whole case, at the same time begging that an only son should be surrendered to them for slaughter. As it was the custom of that country to perform these hideous rites on occasions of emergency, an order was made out for them, and it was entrusted for execution to the wretch who had been promoted from obscurity to honour.

Overjoyed at his good fortune, he hastened to the house of the washerman, and with his own hands dragged forth the unfortunate Bussunt and led him away to the ship, saying: 'This is my day of revenge.' In vain followed the washerman and his wife, weeping and lamenting. The youth was handed over to the sorcerer, and the merchants prepared to sacrifice him to the sea.

'What are you going to do with me?' asked the boy.

'We are going,' answered they, 'to sprinkle your life-blood on the deck of the ship, and then she will float and we shall be able to sail. So prepare, for in two minutes off comes your head.'

Now, Prince Bussunt had himself learnt something of magic and charms from his wicked stepmother, and at the same time he was also wise and intelligent. So, addressing the merchants, he said to them: 'Sirs, what is it you really desire? Do you wish to take off my head, or only to float your ship?'

They all answered: 'What we really want is to set sail as soon as possible.'

Then Bussunt took out his knife, and, opening a vein in his arm, he sprinkled the deck with his blood. At the same time the sailors and the people all pushed with a will, and in a moment the ship slid from the bank into deep water, where, having quickly righted herself, she was soon riding at anchor.

The merchants and the sailors were all delighted, nor did they desire anything more, but the villainous watchman conspired with their chief, and said: 'By the king's gift this boy is yours. Your ship may ground somewhere else; therefore, be prudent and take your prisoner with you.' So Bussunt was immediately seized and carried on board.

No time was wasted in weighing the anchor and in

unfurling and raising the sails, and in less than an hour the disconsolate washerman and his wife saw the vessel ploughing the river to the neighbouring sea before a favourable wind.

Long was the voyage, but Bussunt commended himself to all by his gentle manners and willing obedience, and the principal merchant, to whom the ship belonged, began to regard him with favour.

At last they reached their destination, and the ship was moored to one of the wharfs of a great seaport. Then the merchants and the sailors carried their bales and boxes of merchandise on shore, and betook them to the bazaars, leaving Bussunt to keep guard on the deck.

Now, it happened that quite close to the wharf at which the vessel was moored rose the walls and turrets of the king's palace. This king had a most lovely daughter, who often came and sat at a lattice overlooking the sea, and as she was young and romantic, she loved to lean her cheek upon her hand and gaze over the moonlit waters.

Once when she was thus engaged she heard the sound of weeping rising from the deck of the strange ship, but it was so dark that she could not see who it was that thus bemoaned his fate. In the morning, however, she looked out again and saw Prince Bussunt sitting in the stern with a book in his hand, from which he was reading aloud. As she gazed at his face, she thought to herself: 'Surely never was anyone so handsome!' and as she listened to his voice she thought: 'Was ever voice more beautiful than his?' That night she watched and heard him weeping again, and soon she discovered that thus he spent most of his time, reading aloud while the daylight lasted and crying over his troubles in the dark hours of the night.

Resolved to become acquainted with this mysterious visitor to her father's kingdom, she told her slave-girl to go down and find out who he was. So the slave-girl went as she was ordered, and, entering the ship, she approached the spot where at that time Bussunt was lying asleep in the moonlight. Looking closely at him, she came away again, and returned quickly to her young mistress, to

whom she said: 'I have just seen a youth more beautiful than the moon.'

Then said the princess: 'Come along with me. I must go and see him too.' And, disguising herself, she descended to the wharf, ran across it, and went on to the deck, where she felt as she gazed that her whole soul was ravished with love. And so she returned weeping and sighing to her chamber.

While she was sitting sadly at her window the prince awoke and said: 'Have I been dreaming, or did some



beautiful lady really visit me in my sleep?' He then looked up, and in the full moonlight he saw the lady of his dreams gazing at him from the lattice, and as his eyes met hers his soul escaped from his body, and he fell hopelessly in love with her. Then the princess called the slave-girl and bade her go down quickly to the ship and tell Bussunt how much she loved him, and that if so he pleased she was ready to marry him, since her father's affection for his daughter was such that he had given her liberty to choose her own mate and to marry the man of her heart.

A happy time they had together, these two young people, day after day and night after night exchanging signs and tokens of mutual love. For the sake of the princess the king accepted Bussunt as a son-in-law, and believing him to be the son of the principal merchant of the ship, he loaded him with favours and bestowed on him ample wealth. Nor were the merchants themselves less kind and friendly on account of his fortune, though in secret they were always plotting how they might ruin him and enrich themselves at his expense.

In due time the wedding was celebrated and the prince lodged in the palace, but the next day the merchants came and said: 'The ship is laden, the breeze is fair, and we must set sail. Come, boy, it is time to be off.' The prince at once went and informed the king. 'Our vessel,' said he, 'sails to-day. What am I to do?'

'Take ample gold,' answered the king, 'and take your wife on board with you, and when you have both travelled all the world over come back and see me again.'

So they went on board the vessel, the prince, the princess, and the company of merchants, and to pass away the idle time the prince began from that very day to tell his wife the story of his life.

When she had heard the whole of his adventures she was grieved, and cried: 'Oh, why did you not tell me of this before? Both my father and I believed you to be the son of the merchant. But you are a prince, and none of his, and his past treatment of you augurs ill for the future. We are now in this man's hands, and Heaven knows what he may do to us!'

From that day she watched and guarded her husband with the most assiduous care, expecting she knew not what, but fearing the worst. Nor was her dread destitute of foundation, for the merchants had conspired together, saying: 'Let us wait our opportunity, and throw the lad overboard, and then we can divide his money amongst us, while, as for the princess, we can take her to the king's palace and sell her at a fabulous price as a slave.'

With all their malice, however, they found no opportunity

of carrying their schemes into practice, until they had fairly entered the river and had arrived within a few miles of the city which was governed by Prince Roop. Then, as the weary princess rested apart, they approached Bussunt, who was sleeping on a carpet on the deck, and, tying the four corners of the carpet hastily together, they lifted him up and threw him overboard into the river, which was running fast astern.

But the ship continued her course, and when they arrived at the city the merchants took the weeping girl to the palace



and sold her for an immense sum in gold. Prince Roop as soon as he saw her thought she surpassed in beauty every other lady whom he had ever beheld. And he had a mind to marry her at once; but the princess said to him: 'I am married already.'

'That can hardly be,' answered he. 'Are you not a slave?'

'I am married,' repeated she. 'Grant me, therefore, just three years to mourn and to inquire for my husband. If in that time he does not come for me, you are free to marry me; but if you attempt to wed me by violence, know that I am a princess, and that I will kill both you and myself.'

The king heard these words without anger, assigned to her a separate palace, and gave her a bevy of maidens to attend upon her.

Meanwhile Fortune had not altogether abandoned the younger prince. Finding himself in the rushing water, he struggled with all his might, and, having freed himself from the carpet, he struck out manfully for the neighbouring banks. But the current was set in strong towards the sea, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he made the shore before it was too late.

[In that ardent region of the earth's surface, where the rays of the sun are very powerful, in order to secure the fruits of their fields farmers have to depend on artificial irrigation. On the alluvial lands which stretch along the borders of the rivers they are accustomed to sink down shafts in the perpendicular banks to the flowing water. These shafts are open all the way down on the river-side, being semi-cylindrical, and the water is drawn up by means of Persian wheels turned by bullocks.]

Into one of these singular wells Prince Bussunt was driven by the force of the current, and, seizing the suspended ropes to which the numerous pitchers were attached, he held firmly on.

It happened that the gardener who owned the land above was just then watering his fields, and perceiving that some accident had stopped the wheels from working, he went to the well and looked down, when to his surprise he saw Bussunt, half drowned, clinging to the ropes. Calling for help, he succeeded in rescuing the lad from his woeful plight, and in restoring him once more to solid ground.

Prince Bussunt was so exhausted that he fainted away, and the gardener and his wife had to carry him home. There he was seized with a violent fever, which lasted for weeks, and which left him so feeble that he was unable to walk for several weeks more. All hope of ever recovering his lost princess had now vanished from his mind, for he knew well that if she had not been shut up in the house of the merchant she had been sold into slavery. When therefore he was well enough, he offered his services to his benefactors,

who gladly accepted them, and the king's son became a gardener.

Now, this old man and his wife were accustomed to make a little money by selling their vegetables; and so one day they said to Bussunt: 'You are now strong and well enough to earn something for yourself. Fill up a basket with cucumbers, and carry them into the market for sale.'

'If,' answered Bussunt, 'you would have me go in and out of the town without fear of violence, give me the clothing of a girl, because in that place lives a certain man who has twice attempted my life.'

So the prince was dressed up as a girl, and in that disguise he accompanied the gardener's wife day by day, whenever she went to the town to sell her vegetables and to buy food.

One day, as they were passing through the bazaar, they met the town-crier beating a drum and crying aloud: 'Ho people, by order of the king, if anyone was ever shipwrecked or lost at sea let him come with me to the court and tell the story, and his reward shall be great!'

'Mother,' said Bussunt, 'my chance has come to reward you as you have befriended me. Let me go to the palace and tell the story of my adventures.'

'But who will believe you?' said the gardener's wife. 'You are no longer a boy, but a girl.'

'Still, give me leave,' pleaded he, 'and let us trust to chance.'

So the woman went to the crier and said: 'Here is this daughter of mine who knows a story of the sea.'

And the crier took Bussunt disguised as he was, and he was brought to the palace, and seated before the princess, who bade him tell his adventures at sea. Bussunt, therefore, sat down and began the story of his life from the very beginning, about his father and his stepmother and his exile from home; but when he came to tell of himself and his brother sleeping at night under the tälli-tree, he there stopped short, and said: 'Of that story I can remember no more to-day.'

Then the princess turned to a slave-girl and said: 'This is the very person I want. She will remember perhaps to-

morrow. Give her money, therefore, and tell her to come again.' And to the watchman or crier she sent word that he should watch for the girl's return, and that when she came again to the town with her basket of vegetables he should bring her before her.

The next day the old woman and Bussunt, laden with vegetables, again came to the town, and again they heard the crier beating his drum and proclaiming the will of the princess, and again the prince said: 'Mother, if you will allow me, I will go and tell the rest of the story to-day.'

And the old woman answered as before: 'Go, son, go.' So to the princess he went, and he continued the story of his life from the point at which he left off the day before. But when he came to the account of the manner in which he had been tied up in his sleeping carpet on the deck of the ship, he again stopped and said: 'The rest I do not know, I cannot tell, but I will come again some other time and finish the story.' So the princess ordered him splendid presents and dismissed him. All this money he faithfully took to the gardener and his wife, who were both overjoyed.

The next day came the old woman and Bussunt to the town as usual, and again the town-crier was seen beating his drum and delivering his message. The woman went up to him and said: 'Take my daughter to the palace only once more, and she will finish her story of the sea.'

So Prince Bussunt again sat before the princess and took up his story, but when he got to the tale of the well, and how he had escaped, and how the gardener and his wife had nursed him back to life, the princess rose from her seat and ran to him and embraced him, crying, 'My husband, my husband!'

'Nay,' said he, 'I am only a poor gardener's daughter.'

Then she wept over him and kissed him, and he revealed himself to her, and when he had bathed and dressed in princely robes he returned to the chamber again. So the princess sat down and wrote to the king, saying: 'My lost husband is found again, but if you do not believe, come yourself and see him.'

As soon as they met, the younger brother at once recognised the elder, but the elder did not recognise the

younger, and he said to him: 'What is your history, that you come here to claim the princess?' Then Bussunt began to tell his direful story again. The king sat down and listened with interest growing deeper and deeper, and when the story was ended he hailed his younger brother with joy, there was full recognition, and the palace resounded with the welcome news.

The next day the king took his brother and his wife and gave them quarters in his own palace. And the younger said: 'Is that wicked watchman here still?'

'He is,' answered Roop, the elder. 'The order of the late king was that whoever killed the man-eating tiger should be advanced to honour, and the watchman is now the governor of a province. But I have sent to have him seized and produced before me.'

'Alas!' answered Bussunt, 'it was my fate, and one's fate who can avoid? Therefore spare the man's life and let him live for my sake.'

Nor did he forget the old gardener and his wife, who received promotion and lived in comfort all their days.

So Bussunt became his elder brother's chief counsellor, and at his brother's court he lived for many months. But the time came when he longed to return to his father's house to see if the old man was yet alive. So, taking his wife, he set out and journeyed towards his own country, and when he arrived within the borders of the kingdom he sent forward a message to report his approach. But his father was now old and blind, and everyone had long given him up for dead, and his story was not believed. So he called for a cunning artist to paint his picture, and this picture he sent to the court by the hand of a friend. And when the vizier saw the picture he at once knew it to be the likeness of the lost Prince Bussunt, and he sent out a guard of honour to conduct him to the capital, where he was received with joy.

The old king was so glad to meet his son once more that he placed his crown upon his head, and said: 'Now you shall be king in my stead;' and having done this he turned fakeer, and soon after died happy and content.

Meanwhile the prince had taken his wife to see his step-mother. But she hated the prince more than ever

especially now that he was king; but she dissembled her hatred, and said to him: 'I am now your friend, and I wish also to be considered your brother's friend as well. Give me, therefore, an escort, and let me go and visit him.'

The prince gladly agreed, and she started for the kingdom of Prince Roop; but evil thoughts were burning in her heart as in an oven, and she had determined to set the brothers one against the other.

Arriving at the elder brother's court, she began her wicked schemes. 'Your younger brother,' said she, 'is a tyrant. He deposed his blind father and cast him into a dungeon, where he perished miserably. Me also he would have served in like manner, but I escaped, and he has seized your inheritance and rules the land.'

Unfortunately, the elder brother believed this cruel woman, and he gathered his armies and prepared to make war. In vain Bussunt sent messenger after messenger to explain the true story. He was compelled to arm and advance too, and when the two armies met there was a great battle, in which the elder brother, Prince Roop, was defeated and slain. Then for her life fled the wicked queen, and never halted until she had put herself far beyond the reach of pursuit. As for Prince Bussunt, he mourned for his brother all his days; sorrow like a shadow dogged his steps, and never was he seen to make merry again.



LXXII.

THE BANÉYRWAL AND HIS MOTHER.



A BANÉYRWAL went out coursing on the hills, and he took his mother with him to assist him in the sport. The woman had charge of the hound, but instead of simply holding the leash in her hand, she tied it in a fast knot round her wrist. When the game was put up, the dog made a sudden bound, by reason of which the unfortunate woman was jerked forward, and, as she came into violent contact with a sharp rock some distance in advance of the hound, she was unluckily killed. The dutiful son, with mingled feelings of admiration and sorrow, carried his mother home and buried her, and never afterwards did he cease to honour her, saying to his friends: 'My poor mother was such an excellent courser that she outstripped the very dogs and left them far behind her.'



LXXIII.

FUZZLE NOOR AND THE DEMON.



ONCE upon a time there were two men, Wais by caste, named Mahomed Bux and Amir Khan, who by chance became friends. Mahomed Bux used to visit Amir Khan pretty regularly, and Amir Khan and his wife always received him with respect. One day Amir Khan thought that he also would go to his friend's house, and so he did. But Mahomed Bux's wife was a decided termagant; and the poor man, when he saw his guest approaching, got into a terrible way. So he went to his wife and spoke softly to her. 'Dear wife,' said he, 'Amir Khan is coming. You are the daughter of a noble family, and I hope you will treat him kindly. Whenever I



went to his house, his wife came and washed my feet with warm water, and has always treated me very civilly; so I wish you to do the same.'

'All right,' said she; 'don't worry yourself. I shall not

put you to disgrace before your company. But if you are wise, you will also be careful not to vex me, but to remain quiet at table and keep a civil tongue in your head.'

The meal was prepared accordingly, and the table spread in a room adorned with all kinds of nice furniture. The lady of the house, Fuzzle Noor by name, served up delicious food, but, as there were four at table, the host and his friend and his two grown sons, there was by no means enough for all. When therefore they began to eat, the food fell short; seeing which, Mahomed Bux became anxious, but at the same time he was in mortal fear of his wife. At last he ordered his servant to go and ask her for something more. So the servant went and brought in a fresh mess, but neither was that enough for four hungry men, and Mahomed Bux, trembling with fright, sent her out again. But this time, no sooner had the servant gone into the room and given her message, than Fuzzle Noor flew into a rage, seized the earthen pot, and, coming into the guest-room herself, she smashed the pot on her husband's head, and while the pieces were scattered on the floor, the rim of the pot remained round his neck intact like a horse-collar. On seeing this, Amir Khan was transfixed with astonishment, but he tried to satisfy his host by saying: 'Dear friend, every woman suffers from temper, and these things often happen in my house also. Let us go out for a little walk.'

So the two friends went out, and Mahomed Bux appealed to his companion and begged him to get rid of his wife for him. 'As to myself,' answered Amir Khan, 'I do not like to do such things, but I will see my son and we'll do our best for you.'

Amir Khan then left for his own home, and, arriving there, he called his son, Akbar Khan, and said to him: 'Son, go to Mahomed Bux's, and entice his wife to come here with you under pretence of coming to a marriage-feast; but on the way, when you get to a lonely place, do away with her, that my friend may be rid of her.'

So the son went to the house of Mahomed Bux, and stayed the night there. In the morning he said to Fuzzle Noor: 'Dear aunt, will you accompany me to my father's? We have a marriage-feast going on, and your attendance is most

urgently required.' At first she refused, because she had a lively recollection of the reception she had given the young man's father the day before. But afterwards, when her husband also urged her, she got ready, and, having dressed in her best and put on all her ornaments, she set out with



her husband and Akbar Khan. For many miles they took her through a wild forest, when, towards noon, they came to a well. There they halted, and in their usual manner told her to go to the edge of the well and fetch water. No sooner had she got to the edge of the well than Akbar Khan with the greatest violence pushed her in. Fortunately for her the well was dry, but she fell on to the back of a demon who had his abode in that place, and there, not a bit the worse, she sat. The demon trembled excessively, not knowing what gruesome thing it was that had come and sat on his back. 'Who are you,' cried he, 'that so fearlessly have come on to my back?'

'As for you,' answered she, 'you are merely a wretched demon, while I am own sister to the devil. Still, I saw you once and fell in love with you, and I have been looking for you everywhere—oh, ever so long! To-day some people told me you lived here; so I came, and in this well sure enough I have found you.'

'Will you then be my wife?' asked the demon, fairly taken in.

'With all my heart,' answered she, 'but only on one condition.'

'What is the condition?' inquired he. 'Quick, let me know it soon!'

'It is not a hard one,' replied she. 'It is merely that I administer every morning a hundred strokes on your head with a slipper.'

At first the demon was surprised to hear this. But afterwards, when he considered her beauty, he gave in. So he married her, and for a long time he continued to live with her, but by-and-by he began to get tired of his perpetual beatings, because there was a great wound in his head; and one day, when he went outside, some flies settled on it and laid their eggs there, and he was tormented with pain. Moreover, whenever he went to see his relations, they despised him as a poor demon, a miserable demon, on account of his sores. So he began to droop. He got very mournful, and he longed to get rid of his bargain. With this object in view, he made off, transformed himself into a man, and hid himself from her in a mosque, where women never come and mustn't come.

Now, it so happened that Mahomed Bux, the woman's former husband, had turned dervish, and was then living with some other dervishes in the same mosque. The demon, never suspecting who he really was, met him, and taking him aside, said: 'My brother, all the work which you do shall be done in future by me. I will fetch the water for ablutions, and I will sweep the mosque and keep it in good order, but in return you and your friends shall go to the villages, collect bread, and give me also a share.'

So Mahomed Bux and the other dervishes took out their begging bowls day by day, and in the evening returned with bread. But, at supper-time, the moment they squatted down, the demon invariably clutched all the food with one hand, swallowed it up, and left nothing for them. At last one morning Mahomed Bux went to the demon privately, and said: 'Brother, I think you are not a man at all. You

look very stout, and you eat like some evil spirit. Tell me the truth—what are you?’

‘Tut, tut!’ answered the demon, ‘I am a man, of course!’

‘You are not,’ said Mahomed Bux; ‘I don’t believe you. I can guess from your mode of eating that you are not a man.’

‘My friend,’ then said the demon, ‘you are right. I am really a demon, but be kind enough not to betray me. I have escaped to this place, fleeing from my wife.’ And then the demon went on to tell him the whole story: how he was living in a well, and how a certain woman, own sister to the devil, calling herself Fuzzle Noor, had come there and married him, and what a terrible life he had led with her. All this reminded Mahomed Bux of his own wife, and he concluded that she was the same person. ‘My friend,’ said he to the devil, ‘I also have been ruined by Fuzzle Noor; but now that you have betrayed yourself, perhaps she will be coming round here to look for you.’

‘O friend,’ cried the demon, ‘for God’s sake keep my secret. Do not betray me for the world. Let her not cross my path again. Promise this, and in return I will marry you to the daughter of the king.’

So at once the demon disappeared, made his way to the palace, and entered into the body of the princess. Upon this, the most beautiful damsel in the world became mad, and the king sent for all the wisest men in his kingdom to cure her, but none of them could. The demon caused her to put every doctor and physician who came near her to the greatest disgrace. She tore off their turbans and threw them down; she tweaked their noses, and pulled their beards; and sometimes she threw dust in their faces: so that all the most learned pundits, astrologers, doctors, and magicians became wearied out and indeed quite sick of her.

All this soon came to the ears of Mahomed Bux, who then, as previously agreed upon with the demon, went to the king, and said: ‘I will drive out the evil spirit from your daughter; but first promise that, if I do, you will give her to me in marriage.’ The king gladly consented, and the pretended dervish went into the sick-chamber. As soon as he appeared the raving princess rose up from the floor, and fell at his

feet, to the great astonishment of all her attendants. The king also was much moved, seeing the respect which she paid to so common a man, but he thought to himself, 'Perhaps he is some saint.' Then Mahomed Bux raised



the princess, and said : ' Demon, within, I know you well ; even your relations I know. Set this innocent princess free and go away, otherwise I shall clap you into prison.' But the demon, having acquired such comfortable quarters, was no longer minded to stand to his bargain. Therefore Mahomed Bux bent nearer, and whispered in the lady's ear : ' Brother, that old virago, Fuzzle Noor, your wife, has come !' Scarcely had he spoken the words, when the princess began to tremble and the demon left her. The king kept his word, gave Mahomed Bux his daughter in marriage, and conferred upon him one half of his kingdom.

But the demon still hovered near the city, and one day he came to Mahomed Bux, saying : ' Friend, I have given you a kingdom, but now be careful and attend. I am in love with the daughter of the king's vizier, and I am going to her. I shall enter into her, and stay there ; but if this time you come and interfere with me, I will tear you limb from limb and crush you into pieces.' So the demon went to the house of the vizier, and entered into the body of his

favourite daughter, and there he lodged and the girl went frantic. To see his daughter thus afflicted, the vizier was overwhelmed with sorrow, and he sent for all the physicians and learned men to cure her, but they tried in vain. Then he besought the king to send him his son-in-law; 'I shall go mad myself,' said he, 'if you do not send him.' And the king ordered him to go. But the young man refused, saying, 'My lord, I am quite powerless in this matter. It was by the favour of God that I cured your daughter.' But the king insisted, and afterwards said: 'Look here, sir, if you obey my order, you will gain respect and honour more and more every day; but if you do not, you will come to grief.'

So Mahomed Bux consented and went to the house of the vizier. As soon as the demon saw him, he raged with fury and began to cry out. But his friend said: 'Demon, I have not come here to interfere or to drive you out—I shall keep my promise to the last—but I have come to inform you of something which concerns you deeply. Let me, therefore, have just one word in your ear.'

The demon consented, and Mahomed Bux came near and spoke in the girl's ear thus: 'My dear friend, that day at the palace I was merely joking when I told you Fuzzle Noor had come. But to-day I tell you seriously that she is now at the door of this house waiting for you, and no doubt she will find you out. Hark! I hear her coming up the stairs!'

The demon fell into such a state of fright that he cried: 'For God's sake, friend, get the vizier to send her away, and I promise never to come back any more.'

So Mahomed Bux spoke a few words to the king and the vizier, and the demon, when he thought the coast was clear and the woman driven off, said: 'I am now going.'

Then the girl fell a-trembling and was straightway cured, while the demon fled away into the wilds, and was never heard of again.



LXXI.

THE SEVEN WISE MEN OF BUNEYR.



EVEN men of Buneyr once left their native hills in the purpose of seeking their fortunes. When evening came they all sat down under a tree to rest, when one of them said: 'Let us count to see if we are all here.' So he counted, 'One, two, three, four, five, six,' but, quite counting to reckon

himself, he exclaimed: 'There's one of us missing—we are only six!'

'Nonsense!' cried the others, and the whole company of seven began counting with uplifted forefingers, but they all forgot to count themselves.

Fearing some evil, they now rose up, and at once set out in search after their missing comrade. Presently they met a shepherd, who greeted them civilly and said: 'Friends, why are you in such low spirits?'

'We have lost one of our party,' answered they; 'we started this morning seven in number, and now we are only six. Have you seen any one of us hereabouts?'

'But,' said the shepherd, 'seven you are, for I have found your lost companion; behold—one, two, three, four, five, six, *seven!*'

'Ah,' answered the wise men of Buneyr, 'you have indeed found our missing brother. We owe you a debt of gratitude. Because you have done us this service, we insist on doing a month's free labour for you.'

So the shepherd, overjoyed with his good fortune, took the men home with him.

Now, the shepherd's mother was a very old woman, in her dotage, utterly feeble and unable to help herself. When the morning came he placed her under the care of one of the

Buneyris, saying to him : ' You will stay here and take care of my old mother.'

To another Buneyri he said : ' You take out my goats, graze them on the hills by day, and watch over them by night.'

To the other five he said : ' As for you, I shall have work set you to-morrow.'

The man who was left in charge of the old crippled mother found that his time was fully occupied in the constant endeavour to drive off the innumerable flies which in that hot season kept her in a state of continual excitement and irritation. When, however, he saw that all his efforts were fruitless, and that he flapped the wretches away in vain, he became desperate, and, lifting up a large stone, he aimed it deliberately at a certain fly which had settled on the woman's face. Hurling it with all his might, he of course missed the fly, but, alas! he knocked the woman prone on her back. When the shepherd saw this he wrung his hands in despair. ' Ah,' cried he, ' what has your stupidity done for me ? The fly has escaped, but as for my poor old mother, you have killed her dead.'

Meanwhile, the second Buneyri led his flock of goats up and down among the hills, and when mid-day came he rested to eat his bread, while many of the assembled goats lay down beside him. As he was eating he began to observe how the goats were chewing the cud and occasionally looking at him. So he foolishly imagined that they were mocking him, and waxed wroth. ' So,' cried he, ' because I am taking my food, you must needs crowd round and make game of me, must you ?' And, seizing his hatchet, he made a sudden rush at the poor animals, and he had already struck off the heads of several of them, when the shepherd came running to the spot, bemoaning his bad luck and crying to the fellow to desist from slaughter.

That night was a sorrowful one for the trustful shepherd, and bitterly he repented his rashness. In the morning the remaining five wise men of Buneyr came to him, and said : ' It is now our turn. Give us some work to do, too !'

' No, no, my friends,' answered he ; ' you have amply

repaid me for the trifling favour I did for you in finding your missing companion ; and now, for God's sake, go your way and let me see you no more.'

Hearing these words, the wise men of Buneyr resumed their journey.



LXXV.

THE FOOLISH QUACK.



NE evening, as the sun was setting, some travellers stayed to rest under a clump of trees, and, loosing their camels, set them to graze. It happened that one of the animals entered a melon-field, and that a melon stuck in its throat. The owner, seeing this and fearing to lose the beast, tied a blanket round its throat, and then struck the place with the greatest violence. Instantly the melon broke in the throat of the camel, and it was then easily swallowed.

A certain man who had just come up, looking on and observing this proceeding, shouldered his bundle, and, going to the next village, pretended that he was a doctor.

'But what can you cure?' asked the villagers.

'I can cure the goitre,' answered the quack.

An old woman, whose throat was swollen to a frightful size, exclaimed : 'O my son, if you would only cure my goitre, I would bless you for evermore !'

'Certainly,' answered the man ; 'here, bring me a blanket and a good-sized mallet.'

As soon as they were brought, he tied up the woman's throat, and struck the swollen part with so much force that the poor old creature instantly expired.

'Ah,' cried the people, 'this fellow is a villain !'

So they seized him, being minded to carry him before the king. One of them, however, said: 'She was a very old woman, who must have died shortly in any case. Let us therefore compel the wretch to dig her grave, and then we can beat him and let him go.' So they took him and set him to work, but the ground was so stiff and hard that he made but slow progress.

'If you do not dig it,' said they, 'before the king you shall go, and then you will be hanged.'

Thus exhorted, the unfortunate man, in the greatest fear, laboured away with all his might; and at last, when the villagers saw that he had finished his task and buried the victim of his mistaken treatment, they beat him well and let him go.



Uninfluenced by the severity of his punishment, the man mounted his camel and went on to the next village, and again gave himself out as a great doctor.

'And what can you cure?' said some.

'I can cure goitre,' answered he.

This time it was an old man who offered himself for treatment. But the pretended doctor said: 'Look here, good people. I shall do my best to cure this case; but

remember, if I am so unfortunate as to kill him, I am not to be compelled to dig the man's grave.'

'A pretty sort of doctor you must be!' cried they. 'Before you begin your treatment, you are talking of digging the patient's grave! Away with you; we shall have nothing to do with you.'

Hearing this, the pretended doctor began to say to himself: 'What an extraordinary thing this is! My best plan surely is to return to the camel-men, and tell them they have not shown me the right way to cure this disease. Perhaps they will advise me.'

When he had overtaken them, he cried: 'What foolish men you must be! I met an old woman who suffered from goitre just like your camel; and I tied a blanket round her neck and struck her with a mallet, but, instead of recovering like your camel, she died, and instead of getting a fee I was compelled to dig her grave!'

'It is not we who are stupid,' answered the camel-men, 'but you. We are not stupid at all. These animals are camels of prodigious size and strength. How was a feeble old woman to stand the blow of a mallet? No; it is you, and you only, who are stupid.'

One of the men now stepped forward, saying to his friends: 'You remain quiet, and leave this fellow to me.' Then, addressing himself to the newcomer, he cried: 'Hear you, sir, these men do not understand the matter at all. I can set it all right for you in a minute.' Saying this, he lifted a heavy stick, bound with iron rings, and struck a camel which was feeding off the leaves of a wild plum-tree. The stolid creature, scarcely feeling the blow, merely moved a step or two forward. 'You observe,' said the man, 'the effect of this treatment on the camel. Now observe its effect on a human being!' He then struck the man himself a similar blow, which felled him to the earth like a log. When consciousness returned, his bewildered victim inquired: 'Why, sir, this cruel usage?'

'Do you not perceive?' answered the camel-man. 'I wished to show you that what is good for camels is not therefore good for poor old men and women.'

'Ah,' said the wretched man, 'I now begin to see my error. Never, never again shall I set myself up for a doctor!'



LXXVI.

THE CAMEL AND THE RAT.

A CERTAIN camel, having strayed from his owner, was walking in unfrequented ways with his nose-string trailing upon the ground. As he went slowly along, a rat picked up the end of the string in his mouth, and trotted on in front



of the huge animal, thinking all the time to himself: 'What strength I must have to be leading a camel!' After a little time they came to a bank of a river which crossed the path, and there the rat stopped short.

Said the camel: 'Pray, sir, go on.'

'Nay,' answered his companion, 'the water is too deep for me.'

'Not at all,' said the camel; 'let me try the depth for you.'

Halting in the middle of the stream, the camel looked round and cried : ' You see, I was right—the water is only knee-deep, so come along !'

' Ah !' said the rat, ' but there is a trifling difference between your knees and mine, don't you see ! Pray carry me over.'

' Confess your fault,' replied the camel ; ' consent to acknowledge your pride, and promise to be humble-minded for the future, and I will carry you over in safety.'

To this request the rat gladly agreed, and so the two passed over.



LXXVII.

THE CROW AND ITS YOUNG.

AN old mother-crow was once engaged in giving sound advice to her newly fledged young ones.

' Remember,' said she, ' your principal enemy will be man. Whenever you detect a man in the act of even stooping towards the ground as if for a stone, at once take wing and fly.'

' Very good,' answered one of her precocious youngsters, ' but what if the man happens to have a stone already in his hand ? Can you advise us as to how we shall proceed then ?'



LXXVIII.

THE TWO SIMPLE BANERWÁLS.

ONE Banerwál asked another: 'If the Indus were set on fire where would the fishes go?'

'They would get on the trees,' said the other.

Then said the first: 'Are fishes like buffaloes, then, to climb up trees?'



LXXIX.

THE BANÉYR MAN AND THE BOAT.



A COUNTRYMAN who had spent the whole of his life in the fastnesses of Banéyr, and had never seen the Indus, determined to perform a journey. Descending to the Yusafzai plains, he made his way to Attock, and, when he saw one of the large six-oared ferry-boats crossing with the flood to the opposite bank of the river, he cried: 'What long legs that great creature has!'



LXXX.

GHOLĀM BADSHAH AND HIS SON GHOOOL.



HERE was once a king by name Gholām who had an only son named Ghool. From his early years this young prince was passionately devoted to the pleasures of the field, and though now grown to manhood, his whole time was spent in hunting. The king, his father, could not behold such a condition of things as this without concern, and one day he called his ministers together and said to them : ' It is time for my son to marry. Choose out a wife for him and let him settle.'

The ministers, however, chose in vain. The prince continued to hunt, and though the king remonstrated with him every evening on his return from the chase, his remonstrances were all disregarded. ' If you do not marry,' said the king, ' everyone will say it is because no one will have you, and you will suffer in reputation accordingly.'

' But I do not want to marry,' the prince would answer, and so the matter would remain until the next day.

One evening in the hot weather the young prince, weary with hunting, was returning home, when he stopped to rest by a well. ' Let me drink from your vessel,' said he to one of the damsels who were drawing water.

' Oh,' answered saucily the young girl, ' you are the prince whom no one will marry !'

Prince Ghool was so angry when he heard this speech that he refused to accept the water which was offered to him, and, rising, he walked away. ' When I get home,' said he to himself, ' I shall announce my intention to marry, but my wife shall be the girl who taunted me.'

Meeting an old woman, he asked of her : ' Whose daughter is that ?'

'She is the daughter of Alim the blacksmith,' answered the woman.

'Whether a blacksmith's daughter or a king's,' thought he, 'it is she whom I shall marry.'

That evening his father again addressed him on the subject of marriage, and joyfully learnt that his son was willing to abide by his counsel and to marry. So he summoned his ministers once more, and bade them arrange for the marriage and to choose out some suitable lady. The ministers answered: 'Name the king with whose house you desire an alliance, and we will set out for his court forthwith, and the prince shall bring the bride home.'

But the prince answered: 'Nay, there is no need for you to look abroad. I have made my choice. I will marry Alim the blacksmith's daughter.'

Then was the old king filled with anger. 'What,' cried he, 'is my nobility to be mated with people of low degree?'

But the ministers craftily answered him: 'What harm will it do? This is merely a young man's fancy. Let him have the girl, and meanwhile we will look out for another lady worthy of his rank.'

The king now consented to the match, and ordered his ministers to procure the blacksmith's daughter in marriage for Prince Ghool. When they went to the house the poor man held up his hands in dismay and said: 'Why does the king ask where he can command? But, indeed, as he asks for her, I am by no means willing to part with her.'

This answer was reported to the king, who would brook no denial in the matter, and ordered that the blacksmith should surrender his daughter within two months. But the daughter herself, who felt that she was not fitted for such a destiny, implored her father to petition the king to grant her relief for the space of one year. The petition was granted, and the king finally agreed that the girl should enjoy her freedom for one year more.

'Alas,' said she, 'I am only a poor blacksmith's daughter! What shall I do in order that people may feel respect for me when I am the wife of the prince? Let me see if I cannot test the wisdom of the king's counsellors themselves.'

Addressing her father, she said : ' The water-melons in our little garden are as yet small. I shall make some large unburnt jars, and these I shall paint and enamel, and I will lay a water-melon in each, and when the fruit is full-grown I will challenge the king's ministers to take out the fruit without breaking the jars. And then we shall see whether kings and their ministers are better or wiser than poor folk.'

So the girl did as she proposed, and having made the earthen jars of unburnt clay, she painted them, and in each she laid a growing melon. When the melons were full-grown so as to fill the empty space, she sent two of the jars containing the melons to the king, and wrote a letter requesting that the ministers should be ordered to free the melons without breaking the vessels. This letter the king read to his ministers, and commanded that they should display their wisdom accordingly. But the ministers tried in vain. For two or three days they felt the melons through the narrow necks of the vessels, and examined them carefully, but they had not the sense to perceive that the jars were formed of unbaked clay, which they could easily have discovered by sounding them. At last the king sent back the jars to the daughter of the blacksmith saying : ' There are no such wise people in the whole of my kingdom.'

The girl was delighted beyond measure when she received this news, and when she had taken the jars into her hands she said : ' I now begin to understand what kings' courtiers are, and what kings are also.' Sending to the palace, she requested permission to attend, and when she entered the presence of the king, she took a wet cloth and wrapped it round the jars until the clay was quite soft. She then stretched the necks and drew forth the melons, after which she restored the jars to their former shape. Handing them to the abashed ministers, she said : ' A man is known by his words, and a vessel is known by its sound. As by sounding a vessel of clay you find out its true nature, so I have sounded you, and I find you wanting in sense, and now, when the year is over, the king's commands shall be obeyed.'

When the term of probation was nearly over, the blacksmith wrote to the king a petition praying that, as his means were small, the guests to be entertained in his house should be few. The king answered: 'Four hundred will attend from the court, and for these only I will myself be chargeable,' and he sent him a sum of money.

At last the day arrived and the guests assembled, but the blacksmith, finding the sum insufficient, said: 'There is a great number of people here;' and he went to a certain nobleman and stated his difficulty. The nobleman advised him to keep the money as dower for his daughter, and to send it back with her to the king, and meanwhile he spoke to the court party, who all promised their assistance in entertaining the rest of the guests, and the feast passed off very well.

When all was over, and the prince and the girl were united in wedlock, the king's party returned to the palace, and the bride and her dower were taken home and she was lodged in the apartments reserved for her.



When two or three days had passed by, Prince Ghool rose up early one morning, and, taking a whip, he lashed his new wife unmercifully. 'This is what I owe you,' said he, 'for your taunt to me at the well.' The girl bore the

beating in surprised silence. Every two or three days the same scene was enacted, the prince with his own hands baring the shoulders of his unhappy wife and ill-using her.

One morning, when he got up as usual to beat her, she said to him: 'What glory do you gain by beating a poor working man's child? If you are a man, you will go and marry a king's daughter. Win her if you can, and beat her if you dare: but I am only the daughter of a blacksmith.'

On hearing this taunt, the prince was so incensed that he dropped the whip and vowed never to enter the house again until he had married the daughter of a king.

Now, there was a certain princess, the daughter of a neighbouring king, whose beauty was justly celebrated, though she was said to be dumb, and she it was whom the prince determined to marry. So he chose out a trusty slave and his best horse, and, having loaded several mules with jewels and presents of inestimable value, he set out one morning for the court of the king her father. March by march he travelled along, until at last he reached the kingdom, but in answer to his inquiries all he could learn from the inhabitants was that the princess could not speak, and that every prince who came before her as a suitor had to consent to play chess with her, and that the penalties which she inflicted on his presumption when he lost the game were of the severest description. Nevertheless, Prince Ghool had so much vain confidence in his own powers that, nothing daunted, he sent forward his slave to announce his arrival to the princess, and to request the honour of her hand in marriage.

'It is necessary,' answered the princess, 'that your master should understand the conditions. He must try his skill with me in three games of chess. If he lose the first, he forfeits his horse; if the second, his head is to be at my mercy; and if he loses the third, it shall be my right, if I choose, to make him a groom in my stables.'

The prince at once accepted these proposals, and the event was made known in the city by the sounding of a great drum. 'Ah,' said the people, when they heard the familiar sound, 'another prince endowed with "blind

wisdom" has come to play with the princess, and he will lose, as all others have lost before him!"

When the prince arrived at the palace, he was admitted, and there he found the princess seated on a rich carpet, while the chess-board lay on the carpet in front of her.



The first game he lost, and the second, and the third. 'Begone, presumptuous pretender,' cried she, 'and take your place with your predecessors; you are only fitted to groom my horses!' So the unfortunate claimant for her hand was led away and set to mind one of her horses.

Some time had elapsed, when the blacksmith's daughter began to wonder at the continued absence

of her lord, and she determined to follow him in order to learn his fate. So she disguised herself as a young nobleman, and very handsome she looked in her new attire when riding her beautiful steed. After a journey of many miles, she came to a river broad and deep, and, as she stood on the bank waiting for the ferry-boat, she observed a rat being carried down by the stream. 'For God's sake,' cried the drowning rat, 'save me! Help me, and I will help you!'

The blacksmith's daughter said to herself: 'No rat can possibly help me, yet I will certainly save you;' and she lowered the point of her lance to the water, and the rat, seizing it, climbed up to her and was saved. Taking the

dripping creature in her hand, she placed it in safety on her saddle-bow.

‘Where are you going?’ asked the rat.

‘I am going to the kingdom of the dumb princess,’ answered she.

‘What is the use of your going there?’ said the rat.

‘What will you gain? The princess possesses a magic cat, and on the head of the magic cat there stands a magic light which renders her invisible, and enables her to mix up all the chessmen unperceived, so that the princess’s suitors invariably lose the game and are ruined.’

Hearing this, the blacksmith’s daughter began to fondle and pet the rat, and to say to it: ‘Assist me, for I also would try my fortune with the princess,’ while at the same time she felt that her husband had tried his fortune and had lost.

Then the rat looked at her, and said: ‘Your hands and your feet are those of a woman, though your dress is that of a man. First, tell me truly, are you really a man, or am I lacking in wisdom?’

Then she began to tell the creature all her history from beginning to end, and how she had set out in search of her husband, Prince Ghool. ‘And now,’ said she, ‘I want your assistance to recover my husband’s liberty and to restore him to his rank and position.’

This was a rat which never forgot a kindness, but, on the contrary, always endeavoured to repay a benefactor tenfold. ‘You must take me with you,’ said he, ‘hidden in your clothing, and if you will follow my advice you will beat the princess and you will attain your utmost desires.’ The rat then instructed her in the means of achieving a victory, and so at last in conversation of a pleasing description they approached the capital and there rested.

The next day, when the blacksmith’s daughter was admitted to the princess’s reception-room, she began by requesting that she might change places with her at the chess-board; and, as her request was granted, she secured the side on which the magic cat invariably entered the room. Then the game began; but soon she perceived that the board

was becoming confused, and that she was gradually losing ground. Seeing this, she produced the rat, holding it the while firmly in her hand. Immediately she felt a sudden rush as of some animal, which, in fact, was the cat herself, which had that moment entered, and which in her eagerness to pounce on the rat had forgotten all about the game and her mistress's interests. The blacksmith's daughter, though she could not see the cat, still struck at her with her hand, and the magic light fell to the floor. Poor pussy was now rendered perfectly visible, and, having been scared by the unexpected blow, she ran with hair erect out of the room.

When the princess perceived these untoward occurrences, she trembled and lost heart, so that she was easily beaten, not only in the first game, but in the succeeding ones as well.



At that moment the sound of the great drum was heard reverberating through the city, and the inhabitants knew by that signal the result of the game.

Now, there was one more condition attached to the wooing of this princess, which she had the privilege of insisting upon before she could be compelled to surrender her hand. It was that her suitor should prevail upon her to **speak**

three times before sunrise ; and it was ordained by a decree that each time she spoke the great drum should be sounded by an attendant slave, for the information of all the king's subjects.

' You see,' said the rat to the blacksmith's daughter, ' the assistance I have rendered you has not been in vain. And now let us see if we cannot make this obstinate princess speak. Your sleeping places will not be divided even by a curtain. Keep me with you, and when you are both in bed, set me loose, and I will get on the princess's bed, while you must coax her to speak.'

When they had retired and had lain down each on her own side of the apartment, the blacksmith's daughter in her feigned voice began : ' Charming princess, light and glory of my eyes, will you not speak to me ?'

The princess vouchsafed not a word. But the rat, which was sitting by one of the legs of her bed, imitating the princess's voice, exclaimed with the utmost tenderness : ' Dear prince, sweet prince, at your request I could speak on for ever !'

When the princess heard this extraordinary statement, she thought to herself : ' This prince is such a master of magic that he makes the very leg of my bed imitate my voice and answer for me.' Then, shaking with rage, she cried to the inanimate wood : ' To-morrow morning you shall be hacked off and burnt in the fire for disgracing your mistress.'

The instant these words were uttered by her, the attendant slave ran to the tower and sounded the drum, and all the people heard and wondered. At the same time the blacksmith's daughter cried joyfully, ' Salaam Alaikim, to the leg of my charmer's bed !' to which the concealed rat replied : ' To you also, my king, Alaikim salaam !'

After a minute or two the blacksmith's daughter, again addressing the angry princess, said in coaxing tones : ' As I have to lodge under your roof to-night, O sweet princess, pray tell me a story to send me to sleep !' The rat, having moved away to another leg of the bed, immediately answered : ' Shall I tell you what I have witnessed with

my own eyes, or merely something which has happened to me?"

'The best story,' replied the blacksmith's daughter, 'would comprise both what you have seen and what has happened to you.'

'Very well,' said the rat, 'I will tell you what I have seen, heard, and encountered myself: In a certain city



there lived a robber who used to rob on a large scale. Once upon a time, in order to carry on his tricks, he left his own country and went into another country, leaving his wife behind him. During his absence the woman was visited by a thief: now listen to me well, and do not fall asleep. This thief came and practised such deceit on her that she took him for her husband and admitted him to her house, her true husband having been a very long time away. At last the robber returned, and, finding the thief established in his home, he was astonished, saying to himself, "Has any kinsman of my wife's come to see her?" However, he salaamed and entered the door, when the thief exclaimed to him roughly, "Sir, who are you?"

"This house is mine," answered the robber; "my wife lives here."

"Nay," said the thief, "the woman is not your wife, but

mine. You must be some bad character, and I shall send at once for the police and have you well thrashed."

'The robber was astounded. "Wife," said he, "do you not know me? I am your husband!"

"Nonsense, man," replied the woman, "this is my husband—I never saw you before."

"This is a pretty thing!" cried the robber, and he was fain to sleep elsewhere.

'In the morning all the neighbours assembled and welcomed the robber as an old friend; and to the wife they said, "You have made a slight mistake; this is your real husband, the other fellow is not." A regular fight ensued between the rival claimants, and they were carried off to the judge, when the woman settled the difficulty by saying, "I am the wife of him who brings me home the most money."

'Then said the thief to the robber, "Who and what are you?"

"I am a robber," answered he; "who are you?"

"I am a thief," said the other.

'The thief, who would by no means relinquish the woman, now said: "Listen to me. Let us make trial of our skill. First, show me what you can do, or, if you please, I will begin. I am a thief and a cheat. If you can do more in robbery than I can perform in deceit, the woman is yours; but if otherwise, she is mine."

'The thief then hired some fine clothing, got into a palanquin, and, going to a city, gave himself out to be a rich merchant. As he passed through the streets, he stopped at the door of a jeweller, who considered himself so honoured by a visit from one whose great fame had preceded him, that he rose up and made him a humble obeisance.

'The pretended merchant, with a lordly air, now asked, "Have you any pearls for sale?"

"Yes," answered the jeweller.

"Let me see the best you have," said the thief.

'The jeweller immediately produced a beautiful casket, which the thief opened, and found therein several strings of pearls, which he proceeded to examine. After a pause he

gave back the casket, saying, "These are not what I require. I want pearls of a better quality than these. Have you no more?"

"The jeweller then brought out three or four other caskets, one of which the thief opened, and, while pretending to examine the worth of the contents, he adroitly cut off two strings of pearls, and, unseen by the owner, hid them in his sleeve. He then said: "How many boxes of pearls do you possess of this description?"

"Altogether I have seven," answered the jeweller.

"You shall hear from me again," replied the thief, and, getting up, he went at once to the king, who was sitting in court, and paid his respects.

"Well, merchant," said the king, "how has it fared with you since coming to my capital?"

"O king," answered the thief, "I have been robbed of seven boxes of pearls of the greatest value, and, according to information which I have received, they are in the hands of a certain jeweller."

"Immediately the king gave the thief a guard, and ordered that the jeweller's shop should be at once closed and the unfortunate man arrested.

"On their arrival at the shop, the thief pointed out the box out of which he himself had stolen the pearls, and said to the guard, "All my caskets were like that one." The soldiers hereupon took the box and the jeweller back to the king, to whom the thief said: "O king, this casket is mine." But the jeweller protested: "Nay, your highness, this casket is not his property, but mine."

"If it is yours," replied the thief, "tell the king how many strings of pearls it contains."

"It contains one hundred," at once said the jeweller.

"No, no," said the thief, "not one hundred, but ninety-eight."

"Let the strings be counted," commanded the king.

"This order was accordingly obeyed, when it was found, to the satisfaction of the court, that the thief had spoken truly. "The whole of my pearl-caskets," said the thief, "have been stolen from me, and are now unlawfully held by this

jeweller. If this casket had not been mine, how could I have known the number of strings contained in it?"

"True," said the king, "the casket is evidently yours." And he ordered the other caskets also to be delivered to him, but the jeweller was beaten with rods and cast into a prison.

'The robber, who had witnessed the whole of this knavery on the part of the thief, was amazed, and how to overreach such matchless impudence he was puzzled to say. However, he now joined him, and both the rogues went together to the woman's house and related the story.

'Now,' cried the rat, 'you must understand that the father of wisdom, who handed over these pearls to a common swindler and cheat, is also the father of this adorable princess. That is what I saw and what I heard, and so I have told you.'

The princess was so enraged at hearing these concluding words that, being quite unable to restrain herself, she cried out to the leg of the bed: 'When the morning comes you shall be cut off too, and thrown into the fire with your lying brother!'

Hardly had she spoken when the great drum was heard to resound for the second time, and all the people remarked it. 'Salaam Alaikim!' cried the blacksmith's daughter, laughing. 'Alaikim salaam!' answered the rat.

Some little time now passed by, when the blacksmith's daughter again broke silence.

'Delightful creature and most charming princess,' said she, 'you have regaled me with an excellent story. But the night is long and tedious. Pray tell me another.'

The rat, who had moved his position to the third leg of the bed, answered, 'Good, I will tell you what I saw with my eyes and heard with my ears. My former story was all about the thief. You shall now hear the adventure of the robber.

'It was the next day that the robber said to the thief: "It is now my turn. It is necessary, however, that you promise not to open your mouth to say a single word, since I kept strict silence with you. Otherwise you lose the prize."

'To this condition the thief agreed, and both started once more and travelled to the same town. For some time the robber cudgelled his brains to no purpose for some device by which to surpass the thief. "I must contrive some scheme," thought he, "to have the thief imprisoned and his gains transferred to myself." On inquiry he learnt that the king was in the habit of sleeping on the roof of his palace, which was built in a pleasant place by the river-side. Said he to the thief: "You must of course attend me as I attended you, and be a silent witness of my work."

'Taking some iron pegs with him, the robber went to the palace, and, by fixing the pegs in the joints of the masonry one by one, he managed to climb to the roof. When he got to the top he perceived that the king was asleep, and that he was attended by a single guard who was pacing up and down. Watching his opportunity, he cut down the guard and threw his body into the river. Then taking up the musket, he assumed the sentry's functions, and begun pacing backwards and forwards, while the thief sat down at a distance and looked on.

'After a short time the king stirred, and cried: "Sentry!"

"Here I am, sir," answered the robber.

"Come near to me," said the king, "and sit down, and tell me a story, that my soul may rejoice."

'So the robber approached the monarch, and, sitting down as he was directed, he told him the story of the jeweller, the thief, and the pearls. As the story progressed the thief began to tremble with fright, and made repeated signs to the robber to change the subject, or at least not to divulge his name or to betray him; but the robber pretended not to notice him, and went on with his tale. Then suddenly breaking off, he began to tell the king his own story, and how by means of iron pegs he had scaled the palace roof and killed his sentry.

"Good heavens!" cried the king, looking round in consternation. "Who are you? Tell me this instant!"

"Sire," answered the robber, "be not alarmed—I **am** the robber."

"And where is my sentry?" asked the **perplexed monarch.**

“I have just thrown his lifeless body into the river,” said the robber.

The king was greatly alarmed. “And yet,” thought he, “this scoundrel might also have cut me down and disposed of me in the same way, and he didn’t! He must be a good sort of fellow.” This consideration relieved the king’s mind. “Come near to me,” then said he aloud.

“But,” replied the robber, “I was telling your majesty the story of a thief. This person, you must know, now standing behind you, is the very thief in question, and the jeweller is innocent of any crime.” Saying these words, he led the thief forward by the ear.

Morning now dawning, some attendants appeared, the thief was seized, and in due time the jeweller was released out of prison. Then the king, sitting on his judgment seat, gave orders that the pearls should be divided equally between the robber and the jeweller, and that the thief should be blown away from a gun. After this the robber joyfully returned home to his wife and took possession of his house.

‘And now,’ continued the rat, ‘all I have to add is that the father of wisdom who rewards robbers with the property of other people is also the father of this charming lady.’

Hearing these words, the princess became more angry than ever, and cried: ‘O lying spirit, when morning comes I will burn you too!’

Then sounded the drum for the third and last time, and the people of the city heard it, and, turning in their beds, said to their children: ‘To-morrow the princess will be married.’

‘Salaam Alaikim!’ said the blacksmith’s daughter.

‘Alaikim salaam!’ answered the rat, after which the two friends parted, the rat going his own way, while his benefactress closed her eyes and slept.

The next morning the whole city was astir, eager for news of the princess’s wedding, and by common consent there was universal holiday. The blacksmith’s daughter rose betimes, and, dressing herself with the utmost care, she went out to the stables, and there she saw her husband, Prince Ghool, in the costume of a groom, rubbing down a horse with curry-comb and brush. She gazed at him very tenderly for

a moment, while a tear came into her eye, but she hastily recovered herself, and returned to the palace. The whole day was devoted to feastings, games, and rejoicings; and by-and-by the priest came, and in the midst of the assembled dignitaries of the court the blacksmith's daughter and the princess were united in marriage according to the forms in vogue among Mahommedans. When the ceremony was over the sham bridegroom addressed her bride and said: 'I have fairly won you in spite of every difficulty, and now it is my will that for six months you are not to enter my chamber.'

The wisdom of the pretended prince was so great that her father-in-law paid her the greatest possible respect and consulted her in all affairs of state, and her manners and speech were so charming that she won all hearts. One of her earliest acts of grace was to petition the king to release all the unfortunate princes who were engaged in menial attendance on her wife's horses, and to permit them to return to their homes. Her request was granted; but as she herself bore the order, she was careful while dismissing all the rest to except her own husband, and on him she laid her commands to bring to her his horse every morning saddled and bridled, and to attend her on her expeditions. Prince Ghool, noticing all his companions restored to their liberty, could scarcely on these occasions forbear crying with vexation and disappointment as he said to himself: 'I alone am left in slavery!'

After many days the blacksmith's daughter went to the king, and said: 'O king, a favour! Give me leave to visit my own country and my own kindred.' Her prayer was granted, and she was provided with an escort of horsemen, and with every comfort for the journey both for herself and for the princess. Then she ordered Prince Ghool never to leave her horse's side, and over him she set guards lest he should attempt to escape.

After several marches had been accomplished the prince said to himself: 'I perceive that we are going to my own country. Alas! what would the blacksmith's daughter say if she saw me in such a plight as this?'

When the cavalcade came within two or three marches of the capital, and had halted for the night, the blacksmith's daughter sent for her husband, and said to him: 'I have now urgent business on hand, the nature of which I cannot communicate. It is enough that I require a disguise. Do you give me your groom's clothing, and, accepting some of mine in its place, represent me in my absence. Halt here for a month. In a short time I shall see you again.'

The prince, wondering at her request, obeyed, and assumed the dress of his supposed master. But she, having received his groom's clothing from a trusty attendant, together with his curry-comb and brush, locked them all up in a box, and, taking them with her, stole off in the darkness to her father's house.

A day or two having elapsed, and the blacksmith's daughter not returning, Prince Ghool said: 'This prince bade me to remain here for a month with the princess and her retinue. My father is a powerful king, and his capital is near. Why should I not carry off the princess to my own home and swear that I won her?' So that night he gave order accordingly, and on the third day he arrived at his father's palace. He entered in triumph, and proclamation was made everywhere that Prince Ghool had returned, and that he had won the famous dumb princess; and when the people saw him riding through the street by the side of his father, who had gone forth with troops to escort him in, every house resounded with acclamations.

The next day Prince Ghool sent a message to the house of the blacksmith, and ordered him to send his daughter to the palace. As soon as she appeared, he said to her: 'Oh, you taunted me about this princess, did you? Now what have you to say? Have I not won her?'

'Did you win her,' quietly answered she, 'or did I?'

'I did,' protested he.

'Nay, I did,' replied the girl.

She then stamped her little foot, and a servant brought in a box. When the company had been ordered to retire she unlocked the box, and took from it the old curry-comb, the brush, and the old suit of groom's clothes. Holding them

up before the prince, she asked : ' Whose are these—yours or mine ?'

The prince was confounded, and for a moment he could not speak. He then stammered : ' They are mine !'

' Did you, then, win the princess,' demanded she, ' or did I ?'

' You did,' answered he.

' Ah,' said the blacksmith's daughter, ' if you with your father's ministers were not able even to tell the secret of the earthen jars, how could you possibly have won the dumb princess ? But now take her, and marry her, and let us all be happy at last.'



LXXXI.

LÂL BÂDŞÂH, THE RED KING ; OR, THE TWO LITTLE PRINCESSES.



HERE was once a king, not Lâl Bâdshâh, but another, whose wife died, leaving him with two beautiful little daughters.

After a time, as he had no son to be his heir, his vizier said to him : ' O king, it is right that you should marry again, so that your people may not be left without a prince to rule over them hereafter.'

With this advice the king complied, and he brought to his palace a second wife. But she was of a morose and cruel disposition. She hated the two little princesses, and starved them, and, in short, she acted the stepmother to the life.

These little girls, in their unhappiness, used to go out hand-in-hand, and sit and pray by their dead mother's grave ; and to their simple minds it did not seem at all

strange that, when they had said their prayers, they should find by the grave a dish of food, which they always partook of. Day by day at their mother's grave they found a meal, and they said that God had sent it to them.

But the stepmother had a cat, and this cat took it into her head to follow the princesses whenever they went to the grave, and the princesses took notice of her and fed her with scraps.

One day the queen was eyeing the children, and thinking to herself: 'I give them only bran bread, and very little of that; how is it they are so fat?' Then the cat, who divined her thoughts, said: 'The princesses visit their mother's grave every day, and their mother feeds them. That is the reason they look so plump.'

When the queen heard this, she turned so sick with spite and vexation that in a day or two she had to take to her bed. But she pretended to be worse than she was, and at



last she persuaded the king that she was at the point of death.

The king was greatly concerned, and said to her: 'Can nothing be done for you?' This was just what the wicked woman wanted; so she answered: 'I shall never recover

until you have dug up the bones of your former wife and scattered them over the earth.'

The king was very sorry, but to save her life he consented to do it, and his first wife's bones were taken up and scattered, and the stepmother then became quite well again all at once.

The two little girls now conferred together as to what they should do next. 'What now?' asked the little one of the elder. Her sister answered: 'We must trust in God. What is to be is to be, and our destiny must be fulfilled.'

Now, though their mother's bones had been taken away,



these two children continued their visits to the grave as before. Soon they observed a beautiful tree growing out of it, which bore delicious fruit; and, as they constantly ate of it, they were never hungry. One day, however, the cat followed them again, and when they saw her coming, the elder said: 'Hide your fruit!'

'Nay,' said the younger; 'let me give her one plum.'

'If you do,' said the other, 'she will know, and will tell the queen.'

So they hid their fruit, but one plum fell to the ground by accident; and when the cat saw it, she pounced upon it,

and, putting it in her ear, took it away to show it to the queen.

Then this wretched queen fell sick again, and, going through the same pretence as before, she said to the foolish king: 'I shall never be well until you cut down the tree which grows out of your first wife's grave and throw it into the fire.'



The king therefore gave his orders, and the tree was removed root and branch, and they made a fire and burnt it up.

The queen, however, was not satisfied even then. Her hatred of the princesses increased, and she could no longer bear the sight of them: so, with first one reason and then another, she persuaded her husband to take them far away into the desert or into the forest, and to abandon them to their fate.

Early in the morning the king set out with his two little girls, and when he came to a lonely spot, he said to them: 'Children, gather the pretty flowers and play and amuse yourselves, while I go down to that brook and wash my turban.' Even kings were not above doing for themselves in those days, but this time the king only spoke to deceive.

Going to the brook, he set up an empty jar on the top of a long stick, and put a cloth over it, and the blowing of the

wind made the side of the jar knock and knock against the stick, so that the children, when at intervals they heard the sound of the jar, believed it was their father who was washing his turban on the stones, after the manner of the country. At last, however, the day wore away, and it began to get late. Then they sought the brook to rejoin their father, but he, alas, was nowhere to be seen, and they called and called his name in vain.

The little girls were so distressed to find themselves forsaken and alone in the middle of the wilderness that they sat down and cried for a good hour. 'Oh, what now shall



we do?' cried the younger one. Looking up, they saw a lofty rock towering over the trees, and they climbed to the top of it, and gazed all round. Then they saw some smoke rising up far in the distance, and, descending, they set out in the twilight to seek for it.

Before very long they arrived in front of a gloomy castle, where they found an old woman of great stature sitting before the door and blinking at the stars. She was an ogress, but she had the heart of a human being; and when she saw the children, she, being a woman, felt pity for them, and said: 'Poor things! my son is a man-eater, and when he comes home he will eat you both up!'

'Oh, hide us somewhere !' cried they.

Then the ogress took them up and turned them both into flies, and, when she had stuck pins into them, she fastened them to the wall.



Hardly had she done so, when, with a great roar, the ogre returned from the jungle. 'Oh, oh,' cried he :

'“ I smell man's flesh,
I smell man's blood !”



'My son,' said his mother, 'there is no man here. There is no one but you and me only.'

Then he sat down to his hog's flesh and his wine, and fell fast asleep.

In the morning early, after the ogre had gone out as usual, the old ogress pulled out the pins, and turned the children into their proper shapes. 'Get away,' said she, 'as fast as you can; you will be getting me into trouble, too.'

Right glad were the children to escape from that dreadful place, and they hastened away as fast as they could run. At last they came, towards evening, to a most pleasant spot, where there was an immense tree full of shade. In this tree they both passed the night, feeling thankful that they were safe from wild beasts and ogres.



The next day the elder sister remained in the tree sewing with silk, but the younger got down and went into the forest and collected some deer, which willingly followed her everywhere. So the two sisters lived on deer's milk and berries, and, as each had her own occupation, they passed a pleasant time.

One day the elder gave the younger sister a flower, and said to her: 'Sister, you go out every day, and while you are away something might happen. When this flower fades

'If you will make a solemn promise of secrecy,' said she, 'I will help you.'

The vizier faithfully promised, and the princess, descending, made up a delicious dish of partridge and deer's milk, and sent it to the king.

The king was quite delighted, and he said to his minister: 'Vizier, who cooked this partridge?'

'I cooked it,' answered he.

'Who cooked this partridge?' repeated the king.

'I cooked it,' repeated the vizier.

'Who cooked this partridge?' once more cried the king.

'I cooked it,' once more replied the vizier.

'Bury him alive!' screamed the king.



Some of the guard came forward, and, digging a great hole, they thrust in the unlucky vizier, and began to throw the earth over him. When he was buried as high as the neck, the king asked him once more: 'Who cooked this partridge?' and still the vizier answered: 'I cooked it.'

'This is a very obstinate fellow,' said the king. 'In with the earth!'

When he was buried to the mouth, the king for the last time asked him: 'Who cooked this partridge?'

'Take me out, take me out,' cried the vizier, 'and I will confess.'

So he was released from his grave, and then he told the king the whole story.

Lâl Bâdshâh was astonished beyond measure when he heard that a beautiful young princess was living in a tree. Nor was it long before he visited her, when he was so struck with her great beauty and refined manners that he married her there and then, and carried her off on his horse.



The poor girl would have been better pleased if she had been allowed to remain in the tree, and, as she thought of her absent sister, she became very sorrowful. Fortunately, she had a bag of mustard-seed, which she took with her, and as she rode along she dropped the seed on the ground to mark the way.

The younger sister was some distance off, when she suddenly observed that her flower began to fade. So she hastened back as fast as she could; but she was too late: her sister had gone. 'Alas!' cried she, 'what new misfortune is this? Where can my sister be?' She then noticed the mustard-seed, and perceived that it was a track leading into the forest. Instantly she decided to follow it, and, with her deer gambolling about her, she at once set out.

The track led her to a fine city, where she heard that her sister was now the most favoured queen in the king's palace. Resolving to remain in that place, in the hope that she might some day be able to communicate with her, the younger sister made herself a little wicker cabin on an ancient mound, past which flowed a brook, just outside of the city gates. Here she dwelt, by day taking out her deer to graze, and by night sleeping with them in the cabin.

The elder sister, however, though she was so beloved by the king, was hated by all her rivals. They were jealous of her power and of her superior beauty. And when, in the course of time, the poor queen had a baby, they stole it and threw it out of the city, close to the old mound, and instead of it they placed by her bed a basket of charcoal. Having done this, they went to the king, and said : ' This new queen of yours has been brought to bed. But, instead of a baby, she has given birth to a basket of charcoal.' Naturally, the king was very angry, and he ordered his young wife to be cast into a dungeon.

It so happened that the poor little outcast infant was rescued by its aunt, the younger sister, and as the story of the queen's disgrace was soon bruited abroad, she easily recognised the child as the king's. So she took to it, showering on it the greatest affection, and nursing it with deer's milk.

Some time elapsed, and the child had grown into a handsome little lad of four or five years, when the aunt observed that the king frequently rode out past the mound, and that he sometimes stopped to water his horse at the brook. So she made for the little prince a wooden horse as a plaything, and she told him to look out for the king. ' Whenever,' said she, ' the king stops to water his horse, do you water your horse, too, and say : " Drink, O horse ! "'

The child was quite charmed with his new toy, and already imagined himself a gallant knight charging his enemies. When the king came to the brook, as usual he stopped to give his horse some water, and the prince, seeing him, pranced down to the brook, too, and cried : ' Drink, O horse !'

'Silly boy,' said the king to him, 'can a wooden horse drink?'

In the evening the child reported all this to his aunt—how the king had come, and what he had said. 'To-morrow,' said she, 'you must do exactly the same thing, and to the king's question you are to answer, "But, O king, did a woman ever give birth to a basket of charcoal?"'

The next day Lâl Bâdshâh was again watering his horse at the brook, and by his side the little prince was watering his, saying: 'Drink, O horse!'

'Foolish boy,' said the king, 'how can a wooden horse drink water?'



'And, O king,' answered the child, 'how can a woman bring forth a basket of charcoal?'

This answer quite startled the king. 'Now, what can be the meaning of this?' he said; and, noticing that the little boy entered the wicker cabin, he approached it, and, dismounting, went behind it to listen. He then heard the aunt saying: 'Did you repeat to the king what I told you?' And the boy answered, 'Yes,' and related all that had happened. Then said the aunt: 'Lâl Bâdshâh can by no means be a wise king, or else from your answer he would have guessed the truth.'

On hearing these words, the king approached the door, and the aunt at once rose up to pay him respect. 'This boy of yours,' said he, 'has just given me a most mysterious answer. What does it mean?'

So the aunt told him the whole history of her life and of her sister's life, and revealed to him the secret of the boy's birth. Never was the king so pleased in the whole course of his life. He acknowledged his son as heir to his empire, he restored his injured queen to her position and rank, and he amply provided for her younger sister. And so, after many misfortunes, the two sisters, who loved each other so truly, were united once more, and lived happily ever after.



LXXXII.

PRINCE BAIRÂM AND THE FAIRY BRIDE.



ONCE upon a time the king of the giants from the mountains of Kôh Kâf came to visit the kingdoms of men. His name was Safeyd. As he was wandering over the earth he entered a forest, and there he saw a merry company of huntsmen chasing the deer. Their leader was a young prince named Bairâm, and the beauty of this youth was so striking and so unusual that the giant Safeyd felt that he loved him, and that he would never again know happiness or contentment unless he became possessed of him. So he turned himself into a fine horse, with a skin like snow and a neigh like thunder, and in that form repeatedly crossed the path of the prince to attract his attention. The prince was enchanted when he saw so noble a steed, and gave orders that he should be caught. Safeyd was only too glad to permit himself to be saddled and bridled, and to suffer the prince of whom he was

enamoured to vault on to his back. No sooner did he feel him safely seated, however, than he galloped away, and never stopped until he had arrived at his own palace in the mountains which girdle the earth. There he heaped on him every favour, loaded him with gold and precious stones, gave him splendid steeds and hundreds of attendants, clothed him in the richest apparel, and lodged him in a magnificent palace.

After eight days the giant Safeyd came to Bairâm and



said, 'I shall now leave you for eight days. I must go to my brother's wedding. You, however, will remain here; but take this key, which will admit you into an inner garden, which hitherto no one has entered but myself. When you go, go alone, and remember to lock the door again when you return.' So the giant gave the prince the key, and at once set off for the kingdom of his brother.

That very evening Bairâm went to the garden, which surpassed all he had ever imagined. There stood within it a wonderful pavilion of jasper, set with precious stones; fountains played on all sides, and the trees, instead of fruit, were laden with rubies, emeralds and sapphires. Sitting down, he watched the fountains throwing up golden spray, and the reflections mirrored in the beautiful pools. Just then four milk-white doves flew on to a tree, and then settled

in the shape of four fairies by the edge of a tank of clear crystal water. Their beauty seemed to dazzle his eyes. Having unrobed, they entered the water and began to bathe ; and as they were bathing one of them said to the others : ' I have had a dream, and by my dream I can tell that one of us shall be parted from the rest.' They then stepped one by one out of the water and began to dress ; but the most beautiful fairy of all could not find her clothes. Meanwhile, the others, having finished dressing, turned once more into milk-white doves and flew away, the fourth fairy, whose name was Ghuláb Bâno, exclaiming as she bade them farewell : ' It is my kismet. Some different destiny awaits me here, and we shall never meet again.' She then looked towards the steps and saw the prince. At once her heart escaped from her body, and she fell in love with him. Now, it was the prince himself who had stolen the fairy's clothes and hidden them, and, as he knew that if she recovered them she would change into a milk-white dove again, he now brought out another suit, and she clothed herself, and the two lovers remained in the garden.

When eight days had passed the giant Safeyd returned once more to his house. And when Bairâm saw the huge chains which encircled his waist he began to tremble with fear ; but the giant reassured him, saying : ' Fear not ; are you not master of all I possess ?' and he ordered music to play and dancing girls to assemble in numbers to beguile and cheer his spirits, but they were all invisible.

' Do you see them ?' asked the giant.

' No,' answered the prince ; ' I see nothing, but I hear the music and the tinkling of anklets.'

' I will give you some of King Solomon's antimony,' said the giant. ' Touch your eyes with it.'

And when Prince Bairâm had touched his eyes with King Solomon's antimony he saw the whole place filled with troops of exquisite damsels, dancing to the music of viol and drum.

Now, the beautiful fairy whom the prince had captured in the garden was one of the wives of the giant, and the giant knew all that had passed. But his love for Bairâm

was so great that he said to him : 'Take not only Ghuláb Bâno, but all I possess you can take as well.'

One day the fairy grew sad and said, 'Give me leave to visit my father and mother and to return.' So the prince brought out her fairy clothes, and she changed into a milk-white dove and away she flew. But her parents, when they heard the news, were angry that she had married a mortal, and they imprisoned her in a gloomy subterranean city. Therefore she did not return ; and as time went on and still she came not, Prince Bairâm began to pine and droop from sorrow, and for his sake, too, the giant grew sad and melancholy. At last the prince cried : 'I must follow her, and never come back till I find her.'

'Are you quite resolved to go?' asked the giant.

'I can no longer live,' said he, 'without her.'

Then the giant gave him three things : his invisible cap, some of King Solomon's antimony, and one of his own hairs. So the prince set out, and after many days he came to the subterranean city. But because it was all in darkness, and he could not see his way, he rubbed his eyes with the antimony, which made everything plain and clear before him. Then he inquired, and found that the fairy Ghuláb Bâno was imprisoned in a lofty tower of one hundred iron doors. And when he found himself before the tower he put on his magic cap, which rendered him invisible, and which also compelled all the doors to fly wide open. He then entered, and when he saw the fairy princess he took off his cap and rushed into her arms, and with her he remained for many days.



A woman can never keep a secret.* It was not long

* This sentence is literally translated, and reflects the views of the Panjâbis.

before Ghuláb Bâno began to whisper to some of her favourite maids, and to tell her intimate friends the good fortune which had smiled on her in the midst of her banishment. Then the news spread until it reached the ears of her father. He collected his giants together, and, going to the tower, they found the prince with the princess. They were horrified, and cried: 'Come, let us kill him!' Immediately the prince awoke, and, seeing his peril, he put on his magic cap, which made him invisible. Then he took the giant Safeyd's hair, and held it in the flame of the lamp; and as the smoke rose a thousand squadrons of giants at once assembled. There was a great battle; the enemy were routed, and the enraged father compelled to surrender his daughter to Prince Bairâm. After this Safeyd and the prince and the fairy returned in triumph to their beautiful home.

By-and-by, when some years had now elapsed, the prince began to long for his own kingdom; and his longing grew so great that at last he determined to go. The giant became very sad, but on account of his love for him he allowed him leave. Then Ghuláb Bâno changed herself into an enormous bird, and the prince mounted between her wings, and in a moment they alighted close to the capital. There the prince disguised himself as a poor fakeer, while his wife became a milk-white dove. Then he entered the city and called on his old nurse, who at once recognised him, and told him that his vizier had seized the kingdom and was reigning in his stead.

'And where are my wives?' asked Bairâm.

'Three of your wives,' answered she, 'he took to be his wives; but the fourth defied him, and because of her fidelity he imprisoned her in a pit. There a son was born, and there the mother and the babe still remain, and he feeds them with the leavings of his hounds.'

For a time the prince lodged with his nurse, the fairy having resumed her own shape, but one day when he was out news was taken to the false king that a woman surpassing in beauty all the women of the earth had been seen at the house of the old woman. So the false king rushed to the spot, seized Ghuláb Bâno by the arm, and cried: 'Come along with me!'

.

'O king,' answered she, 'let me first go in and change my clothes.'

So she left him waiting at the door, but having entered her chamber, she put on her fairy suit, and, at once changing into a milk-white dove, flew out of the window, and sped far away, but the false king went back to the palace vexed and defeated.

When Bairâm returned, the first thing he said was : 'Where is my wife?'

'She has gone to the vizier's,' said the woman. 'He came and carried her off.'

So the prince took out the giant's hair and held it again in the flame, when instantly there rushed to his help thousands of giants with clubs and swords, and the city was taken, the vizier and the three false wives were slaughtered, while the faithful wife was delivered from the pit and restored to the palace as queen once more. With her Prince Bairâm lived for some time, being always kind and good to her ; but he sighed for the fairy princess, who had flown back to her father's house and had never returned. By degrees his melancholy increased more and more, until, becoming mad, he wandered about the city and the palace and the forest, seeking in vain for his lost love.

Meanwhile the giant Safeyd grew melancholy also, and at last he could bear his grief no longer. So he set out for the kingdom of his friend Bairâm, and, having found him, he carried him away and restored him again to his fairy queen. With her he recovered his health, and his whole after-life was spent in happiness and delight, sometimes with Ghulâb Bâno among the mountains of Kôh Kâf, and sometimes with his faithful wife in the capital of his own kingdom. But at last he left his wife for good and never returned again.



LXXXIII.

THE SILLY WEAVER-GIRL.

A CERTAIN quarter of a village was inhabited only by weavers. One day a fine young weaver-girl was sweeping out the house, and as she swept she said to herself: 'My father and mother, and all my relations, belong to this village. It would be a good thing if I married in this village, and settled here too, so that we should always be together.



But,' continued she, 'if I did marry here, and had a son, and if my son were to sicken and die, oh, how my aunts, my sisters, and my friends would come, and how they would all bewail him!' Thinking of this, she laid her broom against the wall, and began to cry. In came her aunts and her friends, and, seeing her in such distress, they all began to cry too. Then came her father and her uncles and her brothers, and they also began to cry most bitterly; but not one of them had the wit to say, 'What is the matter?—for

whom is this wailing?' At last, when the noise and the weeping had continued for some time, a neighbour said :

'What bad news have you had? Who is dead here?'

'I don't know,' answered one of the howling uncles.

'These women know; ask one of them.'

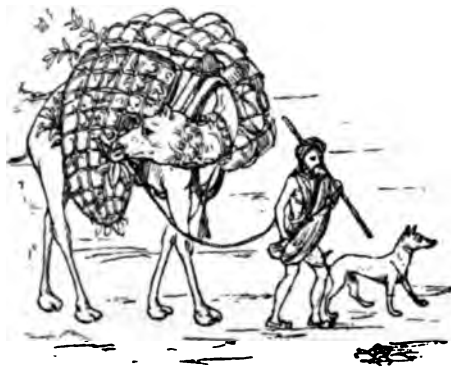
At this point the head-man arrived at the spot, and cried :
'Stop, stop this hubbub, good people, and let us find out what is the matter.' Addressing himself to an old woman, he said :

'What is all this disturbance in the village for?'

'How can I tell?' answered she. 'When I came here, I found this weaver-girl crying about something.'

Then the weaver-girl, on being questioned, said : 'I was weeping because I could not help thinking how, if I married in this village, and had a son, and if my son were to sicken and die, all my aunts, my sisters, and my friends would come round me, and how we should all bewail him. The thought of this made me cry.'

On hearing her answer, the head-man and his followers began to laugh, and the crowd dispersed.



LXXXIV.

THE TIGER AND THE CAT.

TIGERS at first were ignorant, until the king of the tigers once came to the cat and begged him for lessons. The cat,

consenting, taught the tiger to watch, to crouch, to spring, and all the other accomplishments so familiar to the race. At last, when he thought he had learnt everything the cat had to impart, the tiger made a spring at his teacher, intending to tear him and eat him. Instantly the cat ran nimbly up a tree, whither the tiger was unable to follow.

'Come down!' cried the tiger, 'come down in-

stantly!'

'No, no!' replied the cat. 'How fortunate for me that I did not teach you more! Otherwise you would have been able to pursue me even here.'



LXXXV.

THE PRINCESS AND THE OGRES.



ONCE upon a time a certain king went out hunting in the forest. After chasing his game the whole day, he found a wild, fierce woman sitting alone, who, as soon as he came near, sprang to her feet and caught hold of his reins.

'Who are you?' cried the startled king. 'Are you a woman or a demon? Let my horse go!'

'My name is What-will-be-will-be,' replied the woman, 'and one day I shall make you feel my power.'

The king asked her: 'But when will this thing be?'

'Choose, O king,' answered she, 'whether I shall bring it upon you now or at some distant period!'



'Let me not answer you now,' said the king; 'let me first go and consult my queen, and I will return and tell you.'

'Go,' said the fierce old hag; 'I shall await you here.'

So the king rode home, and as he entered his palace his looks were distressed. Said the queen to him: 'Your looks betoken trouble; what is the matter?'

'Oh, do not ask me what is the matter!' answered he. 'I met in the forest an old witch named What-will-be-will-be, and she has bidden me choose whether adversity shall fall upon us now or hereafter. What shall I tell her?'

'You and I,' replied the queen, 'are both of us young and strong. Choose, then, that the trouble may visit us soon, while we are well able to meet and to bear it.'

Then the king returned to the forest, and to the old woman, whom he found in the same spot, he said: 'Whatever is to befall us, let it come now, and not hereafter.'



'Be it so,' answered the woman. 'You have your wish.'

Scarcely had the king arrived at his capital when a mounted messenger met him and informed him that the king of another country was at hand with a vast army to make war upon him. In the battle which ensued this unfortunate monarch was totally routed, and his kingdom fell into the hands of his enemy. But he himself, with his queen and the two princes his sons, and his sons' two

wives, having all armed themselves, and having mounted upon swift horses, fled away from the city and escaped.

On and on they went, as strangers in strange lands, until at last the whole of their money was expended, and poverty and want began to stare them in the face. Then the king said to himself: 'If we could only leave my sons' wives somewhere, and steal away from them unperceived, our troubles would diminish, for we should have fewer mouths to provide for.'

Having formed this cruel design, he soon carried it into practice, and one night, when the two young princesses were wrapt in slumber, the rest of the party, leaving the unfortunate girls a couple of horses and some arms, abandoned them in the wilderness.

When the two princesses awoke, they looked about them, and found themselves alone; and having cried for their friends in vain, they began to say to each other, 'What shall we do now?'



'If we both travel in these wild places as women,' said the elder and wiser sister, 'we shall be robbed and cruelly treated.'

So she set to work, and in a short time she had altered her feminine robes into a man's attire, and having assumed

her arms, she mounted her horse, and she then looked a noble young prince, both valiant and strong, while her beautiful sister, in her own raiment, rode beside her.

The two princesses now set out again to search for their friends, but they rode and searched in vain. No signs of them were to be discovered or seen, neither could they hear any tidings of them.

One day they came to a certain city where there was a king, and in this city the elder sister determined to tarry. So she took a small house for herself and her sister, and every day in her masculine disguise, mounted, and armed with sword and lance, she attended the court of the king, until at last the king observed her, and said to his vizier : ' Who is that stranger who comes every day to court ? '

Then the minister approached the princess, and asked her : ' Who are you ? Are you a king's son or a merchant's son ? What are you, and whence came you ? '

' I am in need of nothing,' answered the princess. ' I am merely looking for a lost brother.'

Then the king called for her, and said to her : ' If honourable service were offered to you, would you accept it ? '

' Yes,' answered the girl, ' but only to become one of your own body-guard.'

The king, who had taken a fancy to this handsome youth, as he supposed the princess to be, immediately made out an order for her, and she was enrolled as a member of his body-guard.

Her duties were light and her payment liberal. She was most assiduous to please, watching the king with careful fidelity whenever she was on guard ; ever active and alert, but never forgetting that her chief concern was to scan the faces of all new-comers, if by any chance her own friends should be among them.

Now, it was a custom in that country that if a criminal were sentenced to death he should be conducted by the executioners to a wild place and hanged on a tree or a gallows, and there at once abandoned, either to escape if he could, or to be the prey of the vultures. One evening, when the princess was on sentry over the king, a notorious robber was

thus taken out and hanged. In the middle of the night the princess heard a dismal howling and wailing, and fearing that some danger was approaching, she boldly entered the forest to find out the cause of the disturbance. In a few minutes she came to the gallows-tree, on which the dead robber was



swaying in the wind, and under the tree she noticed what appeared to be a miserable gaunt woman, who from time to time set up the dismal howling which had so greatly alarmed her. In reality, however, the creature was not a woman, but a female ghoul—that is, a demon in human form, who, like the vampire, wanders about at night and feeds upon corpses.

‘Who are you?’ demanded the princess.

‘This man who has been hanged is my son,’ answered the monster. ‘He hangs too high for me to reach him, for I am old and feeble. If you would lift me up, O strong young sir, I might perhaps kiss him once more, as I shall never see his face again.’

The princess, who did not suspect her true character, raised her up to the body; but the ghoul, instead of kissing it, seized it by the neck with her teeth, and began to suck the blood. Perceiving this horror, the princess instantly dropped her, and, drawing her sword, she struck at her; but

the ghoul evaded the stroke and fled. Nevertheless, the princess had severed a piece of her clothing, which she picked up, and, examining it, she found it was composed of the very richest material, worked in strange and fantastic figures, with threads of gold.



Returning at once to the palace, the princess found the king sitting up awake. 'You are posted here,' said he, 'to guard me from intrusion. Where have you been?'

Then the princess related to the king the whole story, telling him of the dismal wailings and of the female ghoul who had sucked the blood of the robber. The king was incredulous, and said to her: 'Have you any proof of the truth of this extraordinary adventure?'

Then she showed him the piece of cloth, which the king inspected with astonishment and admiration. 'This cloth,' said he, 'is of the rarest quality and most precious.'

He was so pleased that he gave the princess a bag of gold, and sent the cloth as a present to the queen his wife, who, as soon as she had seen and examined it, longed for more of it, and so she sent word to the king: 'Such beautiful cloth has never before been seen in the kingdom. I would have a whole suit of it.'

The king now said to the princess: 'Wherever it was you obtained this wonderful cloth, you must depart instantly and fetch me more of the same pattern.'

The princess was amazed at such an order, and answered: 'Who knows whence the ghoul came or whither she has gone? Where am I to look for her?'

This objection the king merely waved aside. 'If you bring the cloth it will be well with you,' said he, 'but if not, your head shall answer for it!'

'Be it so,' said the princess, with confidence. 'But, O king, grant me time.'

To this request the king assented, and, giving her both time and abundance of money, ordered her to set out forthwith.

The next morning she bade her sister farewell, and started on her quest of the ghoul's coat. Many a day she journeyed, until at last she found herself in the territories of another king. In the midst of this kingdom she arrived at a half-abandoned city, where grass was growing in the streets, and where the few inhabitants wore a melancholy and woe-begone aspect. Here she perceived an old woman surrounded by one or two others, all of whom were kneading huge quantities of dough. As she gazed in wonder, she noticed that the old woman was crying and lamenting.

'O mother,' said the princess, 'you are both baking bread and crying! What is the matter?'

'Every eighth day a ghoul comes here,' answered she—'a monster from the mountains; and the tribute he receives by the king's order is a human being, a buck goat, and two hundred pounds of bread. The reason I am crying is that to-day it is my turn, and that I have to give the ghoul my only son.'

Then said the princess to the old woman, 'Mother, do not cry. When you have the bread ready, let it be taken with the goat to the usual place, and thither I also will go instead of your son.'

'But who in the world,' said the woman, 'would give his life for another?'

Now, the king of that country had made an order that

whosoever should kill or drive away the ghou! should be rewarded with riches and honoured with the hand of one of his daughters. And the princess, having heard of this order, turned to the old woman, and said : ' But is no one able to kill the ghoul ?'

' No one whatever,' answered she.

' Well,' said the princess, ' at least come and show me the place where he is accustomed to feed.'

When the bread was all ready, the old woman and her son, and the buck goat, proceeded with the princess to the spot. In that dismal place, which lay without the city-walls, there stood an old hut, and there the whole tribute used to be put for the ghoul, who always came at night and devoured it all before the morning. Going into the hut, the princess first dug a great hole. Then she placed the goat



and the heap of bread on one side, and on the other she set up a log of wood dressed up to look in the darkness like a boy. Having completed these arrangements, she dismissed the old woman and her friends, and descended herself into the pit, where, with her sword ready drawn in her hand, she crouched down and hid herself. In the middle of the night she heard a roar, and the ghoul, in the form of a gigantic man, rushed into the hut and began to devour. When he

had eaten the bread and the buck goat, he went to the log and seized it ravenously. At that moment the princess rose from her pit, and smote and cut off one of his legs, which so startled the brute that he instantly fled from the hut on his other leg, and made his escape to the hills with the utmost despatch.



In the morning the princess returned to the city, and said to the old woman: 'I had an encounter with the ghou! last night, and he has been punished so handsomely that he will never trouble you or your neighbours again.'

Everyone was astonished, and some cried 'Nonsense!' but the most hopeless were convinced when the princess displayed to them the monster's horrid leg. Then the old woman gave away both money and food in charity for the sake of their glorious deliverer, and because of herself and her son, whom he had delivered from destruction.

When the king, who dwelt in the citadel, heard the news of this exploit he also was surprised beyond measure, and he sent for the princess and treated her with the utmost honour.

'How did you manage to accomplish this great achievement?' asked he.

Then the princess told him the history of her adventure without adding to or diminishing aught from the simple truth.

The king listened with gratified interest, and rewarded the heroine by saying to her: 'It is a decree of mine that whoso shall kill the ghoul or drive him out of my dominions shall receive the hand of my daughter in marriage. The lady is ready, and, therefore, if you are willing to marry her, pray do so.'

The princess was more than grateful for this proof of the king's generosity and goodwill, yet she answered him: 'O king, I have still another enterprise on hand, but when that is safely accomplished I shall again return to your court.'

The king then suffered her to depart, and so, mounting her horse, she travelled on and on again for weeks and months. At last, in the midst of craggy mountains and gloomy defiles belonging to a third kingdom, she came to a lonely fortress with frowning walls and forbidding appearance. Entering the open gateway, she found herself in a



courtyard, and there she saw a gentle maiden sitting spinning, but no one else was visible anywhere. When the girl saw the princess, she first laughed, and then she cried. The princess was amazed, and, going up to her, she said: 'Why do you both laugh and cry?'

'Never since the day of my birth' answered the girl,

'have I seen a man; and when I saw you, therefore, I laughed. But I cried because the ghouls who live in this castle will certainly eat you up.'

'How many ghouls are there?' asked the princess.

'There are two of them,' answered the girl, 'and one of them is the husband of the other.'

'But is there no way of escape for me?' inquired the princess.



'For this one night,' said the girl, 'I may be able to save you from them, but not for more.'

She then rose, and with looks of love conducted the princess to a lonely chamber, and having left some food and some water with her, she fastened the door and came away.

As the shadows began to fall, the two ghouls returned to their gloomy castle, bringing with them some buck goats and the remains of a human being. Having made their horrid evening meal, they poured out quantities of wine into golden goblets and began to quaff and to make merry. Then, looking at the girl, one of them said to the other: 'About this girl of ours, whom we stole as a baby: it is time that we should find a husband for her. If now we could capture a brave man, we might marry them together.'

'I could recognise the man who cut off the skirt of my

coat,' answered the female ghoul. 'If we could find him, we might marry her to him, for a braver man never lived.'

'Ah,' replied the male ghoul, 'but he was a braver man a great deal who cut off my leg.'



The two ghouls now began to dispute and to fall out as to which of the two men was the braver, the male ghoul asserting that the girl should be married to the man who cut off his leg, and the female protesting that she should be the wife of the man who cut off the end of her embroidered coat. And so they fell asleep.

In the morning the two ghouls went away as usual to hunt for man's flesh, and the girl, going to the secret chamber, released the princess from her lonely tower, and brought her forth, telling her as she did so all that had passed between the two ghouls the night before.

'But,' continued she, 'I would rather marry you, dear prince, if the ghouls would allow me.'

Then the princess inquired further into their history, and the girl told her the story of the ghouls' misfortunes: how one lost part of her garment, and the other his leg.

'But,' said the princess, 'it was I who deprived them of both; I cut off the leg of the one, and I cut off some of the cloak of the other. Would they, then, give you to me?'

'They would be most willing to do so,' replied the girl, astonished and pleased.

That day passed in visiting the rooms of the castle and in wondering at its vast treasures and stores of all manner of rarities, and in the evening the princess was again hidden in the secret chamber.

When the ghouls returned, they feasted and caroused as before, and when warmed with wine they again began to dispute as to who should marry the girl, each, without knowing it, extolling the bravery of the same hero. Then said the girl: 'But perhaps it was the one man who achieved both those wonderful exploits. If so, would you allow him to marry me?'

'Marry you?' cried they. 'Of course he should marry you, and take you wherever he pleased.'

'Then,' said the girl, 'give me your most solemn assurance that, if he can be found, you will not kill him.'

'We make the promise, of course,' said they.

Then, going to the secret chamber, the girl brought forth the princess, and took her in before them, and both the savages, at once recognising her, gazed at her with wonder, admiration, and astonishment.

'How did you contrive so well to cut off my leg?' asked the male ghoul.

'I dug a hole in the floor of the hut,' answered the undaunted princess, 'and in that I hid myself, and the goat and the bread I put on one side, and a dressed-up log on the other; and when you passed by me to seize the log, I raised my sword and at a blow off came your leg.'

'Wonderful!' cried the male ghoul, in tones of awe.

'And how did you cut off the skirt of my coat?' asked the female ghoul.

'When I saw what a monster you were,' answered the princess, 'and when I heard you sucking the blood of the dead robber, I dropped you on the ground, and, drawing my sword, I made a stroke at you, and thus it was that I cut off the skirt of your coat.'

'O most wonderful prince!' cried the female ghoul, equally amazed.

Then said they: 'Now take away this girl with you. You have won her; she is yours. Take her to your own country, and marry her.'

When the princess and her bride were all ready for the journey, the ghouls loaded them with heaps of money and presents.

'One thing only I care for,' said the princess, 'and that is the coat of embroidered gold of which I have already a piece.'



Her wish was no sooner expressed than it was gratified; and for the sake of the girl the ghouls presented her with much more of the same material as well. After this they accompanied the pair to the borders of their own territory, and there they left them.

Journeying on, the princess and her young bride arrived at the city which had formerly suffered so greatly from the exactions of the male ghoul. The king was enchanted to welcome her back, and gave her his daughter in marriage in accordance with his promise, together with riches in abundance; after which she continued her journey to the country of her own king; and having arrived at the capital, she committed her two wives to the custody of her younger sister, and at once rode on to the palace. There she pre-

sented the whole of the wonderful cloth which she had brought from the castle of the ghouls; and the king was so delighted that he instantly said to her: 'Now you shall be my prime minister, and you shall live in a palace of your own.'

'Very well,' answered the princess, and at once the order was made out, the decree published, and she was promoted to the head of affairs.

The princess was now both powerful and wealthy, but she never for a moment forgot the one object of her life, which was to find her lost friends. With this thought ever present in her mind, she one day said to the king: 'If you will allow me, I would make a large garden to contain trees and plants of every kind.'

The king approved of her plan, and gave her an immense tract of land for the purpose. Her design was that her garden should be the wonder of the whole world, and so there was not a country to which she did not send her messengers to make known that whosoever would bring her a plant for her garden should receive two gold mohurs. But all the time she was thinking of her dear friends, and hoping that in their poverty and obscurity, wherever they were, they might hear tidings of her wonderful garden, and be induced to bring her some plants for the sake of the reward.

For months this good princess was doomed to disappointment, for, though thousands came with plants of the rarest varieties, her own relations came not. At last the king, her first father-in-law, in his distant exile, heard the proclamation, and, as he was very poor, he and the queen his wife, and their two sons, searched for the rarest plants, and carried them to the famous garden. There, notwithstanding their altered condition, their ragged clothing, and their attenuated frames, they were immediately recognised by the princess. But she refrained herself, and ordered them to be confined in a certain house, over which she placed a guard, while at the same time she herself occupied a room in which she could overhear all they spoke about.

The first thing the king said was: 'Strange! all others receive rewards and are allowed to depart, but we only are placed here under restraint.'

'I suppose,' said the queen, 'we are being punished by God for having so cruelly abandoned those two poor girls in the desert.'

No longer able to restrain herself, the princess left the house and at once ordered her friends to be conducted into sumptuous chambers, and to be supplied with baths and rich clothing, and with food and wine of the best. Then she had them all brought into her own palace, and, in her character and disguise of prime minister of the kingdom, she received them as if for the purpose of a mere audience, nor had any of them any suspicion of her real identity. Having seated them on chairs, she gazed on them, and said: 'What is your history?'

'We were once a royal family,' answered the aged king, 'but misfortune befell us, and we were driven from our king-



dom. Then, in our need and distress, we abandoned the young wives of my two sons in a lonely place, and ever since we have lived poor, unblest and unknown.'

'Yes,' said the princess, 'I suppose you left the princesses because of your necessity. Notwithstanding, every child of man has to eat his own kismet.'

Then she left the room, and for the first time for years she assumed her own proper habit; and taking her sister by

the hand, she led her into the apartment, and looking at the young princes, their husbands, she said: 'You left behind in the desert your two wives, but now God has restored them to you once more.'

Then she turned to the king and queen, and there followed many a fond embrace, with tears and words of surprise and of love, and they were all reunited in a lasting reconciliation.



The next morning the princess went to the king, and said to him: 'The time has come when I must reveal to you the secret of my life. No longer a man, I now assume my proper character, for I am really the wife of a prince of ancient lineage, and my husband is here.'

Then she related the story of her life, and said: 'And now assist us with a suitable army, that we may take the field and recover our own lost inheritance. But if not, then permit me to remain here, and give my friends positions near your own person.'

'Choose,' said the king, 'which you will have.'

'Let us, then, have the troops,' answered she, 'and the treasure to wage a campaign.'

To this proposal the king joyfully agreed, and the princess, with all her friends, set out at the head of an invincible army, and having routed the usurper in a signal battle, they re-

covered their lost dominion, and the old king ascended his throne and reigned once more. Then, having provided splendid matches for the two beautiful girls whom the princess had married in her expedition against the ghouls, the whole united family settled down in peace and prosperity, and lived happily ever afterwards.

My story is about earthly Kings, but the true King is God.*



* Panjābis generally begin and sometimes end their stories of kings with this confession of faith.



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BANĒRWALS, inhabitants of Banēr, a valley beyond the British frontier, north of the Peshawur Valley. Said to be the stupidest and the bravest men among the Afghans. Stories in ridicule of them, 3, 13, 33, 90, 207, 296, 304, 305, 312
BANGLES and bangle-sellers referred to, 157, 203
Note.—Bangles are often of coloured glass.
BANISHMENT of sons, a common motive for a story, 277
BARBERS, tales of, 15, 66, 271
Note.—Barbers are very important personages in village-life. They act as surgeons. They are the go-betweens (with Mirāsīs and Brahmins) in affairs of delicacy. They are great gossips and news-carriers, and are reputed very wise. 'A barber, a crow, and a jackal are the wisest of living creatures.' The barber has to shave the men of his village, and is the general messenger. At harvest he receives an *odi* of grain and a bundle from each plough. At weddings he receives

three rupees, and his wife gets a dress. For circumcising his fee is one rupee, and for the first shaving of a son eight annas.

BARD (*mirāsī*), referred to, 59

Note.—The village bard, though of the lowest possible caste, is almost as necessary to the village-community as the barber. He is learned in old tales and ballads, he plays fiddles, pipes, and drums, and keeps mnemonically the family genealogies. He also carries messages, and helps to arrange marriages, while his women dance and sing at all festivals or for private amusement, and are in most cases of easy virtue. He is paid in kind at harvest time, and receives presents also at births and for bearing good news. He is greatly feared, as he can make impromptu songs in praise or ridicule. He forces himself on all weddings excepting the weddings of potters. The latter rush at him, braying like donkeys, and bite him, so that he is careful to avoid their company.

BARLOW (Thos. Lambert, Esq.), reference to, xii.

BASKET-WORK, a local industry, referred to, xiii.

BASTARDY, a disgrace among Panjābīs, 61

BATHING out of doors, common practice in India, 167

BEARS, common in the forests of the lower Himalayas and in Kashmir, tales of, 12, 118

BEAUTY, fascinating power of, 151, 301, 338, 342, 344

Note.—The following (in the original in verse) is a Panjābī's idea of a beautiful woman:

'A woman should be of medium height,
Her waist slender like the wasp's,
Her eyes black and brilliant,
Her form delicate as a deer's,
Her eyelashes long, like lances,
Her nose and her eyebrows like bows,
Her hair black as a raven,
Her forehead high and wide,
Her neck like that of the *kūlan* (a bird like a heron),
Her teeth white like jasmine-buds,
Her fingers tapering like the *rowānk* (a bean),
Her feet small—thirteen fingers in length,
Her walk like the gait of a pea-fowl,
And her voice like the sound of a harp.
She should be as harmless as a hare,
And as shy as a turtle-dove.'

BEDSTEADS, used also as couches or seats. Very light and simple, 73, 271

BEGGING-BOWLS, carried by fakirs and jogis, 70

BETROTHALS, reference to, 18, 103, 229

Note.—Betrothals take place at very early ages, and are generally arranged by the village barber and

the bard. The kazi repeats a formula, a certain ballad is sung, the body of the bride is rubbed with spiced unguents, and there are feasting and dancing.

BHĀBRĀ, a caste of Hindoos, referred to, 58

BHĀNGH, the Panjābī word for the kazi's call to public prayer. It denotes also the crow of a cock, referred to, 131

BHUNG (Bhangh), Indian hemp, referred to, 190, 193

Note.—A preparation of the seed of the Indian hemp is used all over India as an intoxicant and narcotic. It induces the most fantastic visions, and incites to the maddest acts. It is often mixed with tobacco and smoked in hookahs, causing, in excess, deep slumber and death.

BLACK ANGEL, angel of death, 54

Note.—'If you wish to see a tiger look at a cat,

If you wish to see the angel of death look at your creditor' (old saying).

When a man is buried two angels visit him in his grave, a white angel and a black angel, who ask him 365 questions, upon his answers to which his future depends.

BLACK MOUNTAIN, district so named, xii.

BLACKSMITH, referred to, 83

Note.—He attends to all the iron work required in the village, as the making and repairing of plough-shares, etc., and is paid in grain by each family according to the amount of work done by him.

BLOOD, shedding of human, to ensure success or remove difficulty, 287

BLOOD-SUCKING, example of, in an ogre, 355

'**BORROWED PLUMES**,' a variant of, 245

BOWL, or charger, to contain blood and eyes of prisoner as evidences of his death, 165, 166

BRAHMINS, stories of, 217, 228

Note.—The highest, or priest-caste, among Hindoos. Many Brahmins are sunk in poverty, and work as labourers in the fields and on tea-gardens, but everywhere they retain jealously their exclusive rights.

BREAD, baking of, referred to, 51, 68

Note.—The food of the poor consists of cakes of the meal of Indian corn, baked on the griddle day by day as required. Every man, woman, and child is well practised in the art of kneading and baking bread.

BRIDE, custom of a, to visit her parents for a time within a decent interval after her marriage, 65, 78, 148

BRIDEGROOM, custom of the, to follow his wife, to pay his respects to her parents, and to bring her home again, 65, 78, 147, 264

BROTHERS, wise and foolish, tale of, 92

BRUNI, mention of, xiii.

BUDDHIST influences, xiii.

BUFFALOES, tales of, 68, 81, 105

Note.—Buffaloes form a farmer's principal stock, used for draught, at the plough, and at the well, and their milk and butter are greatly esteemed. During epidemics the whole village subscribes according to means, and buys a *male buffalo*, which is taken round the village by the priests, or kazis, very early in the morning or at night, when all the inhabitants are indoors. As they march they pray that the plague may cease. Then a priest cuts the animal's throat and divides his flesh among the poor, or he sprinkles him with the blood of a kid, and drives him away, when he is either left to stray, or becomes the perquisite of the 'sweepers' (outcast folk) of the community.

Again, if anyone suffers from a stitch or a pain, he must rub the part affected with a peg to which a *bronze buffalo* has been tied.

BUGLA (Bagla), 163

Note.—Here used as the name of a schemer seeking for office. The bagla is properly a large water-bird, snow-white. Hence the Panjābi saying for a hypocrite, 'Outwardly a bagla, inwardly a crow.'

BULLOCKS, properly, OXEN, referred to, 95, 262

Note.—They are used constantly in ploughing and in drawing. Occasionally a bullock is yoked with a buffalo. Breed is very small, but hardy and strong. 'You bullock!' a term of contempt for a man void of sense.

BUNIAH (Bania), grain-seller and general dealer, also money-lender. Most of the landowners are in the grip of the buniahs, who are a mean, cowardly race, grasping and penurious. Generally Hindoo, 29

BURIAL of the dead, referred to, 52, 232

Note.—A Mahomedan as opposed to the Hindoo custom. Ceremonies the same as among Mussulmans generally. No coffin is used, only a winding-sheet.

BURNING of the dead, referred to, 47, 52

Note.—A Hindoo practice. The body is laid on logs, and then covered with other logs, over which oil and unguents are poured. The charred remains are collected and, when possible, sent to the Ganges.

C.

CAMELS, tales of, 15, 34, 80, 130, 269, 307, 310

CAP, invisible, 345

CAPTURING wives, or mistresses, custom illustrated, 175, 192, 257, 339

CARPENTER, village, reference to, 94

Note.—The village carpenter is responsible for all the carpentry required by the community, and, like the blacksmith, receives payment in grain at harvest according to the work done; so much from each family. He is reputed skilful in charms, and is consulted when a spell or the effects of the Evil Eye are to be cured.

CASHMERE, a native's idea of an earthly paradise, 91

Note.—Cashmere, according to popular idea, was to have been the chosen Paradise, and Mahomed had begun sending there the genie bearing through the air immense monoliths for building mansions for the faithful, when he changed his mind, and the genie dropped the monoliths, which are now seen standing in various places in the Upper Panjāb—said monoliths being, of course, prehistoric.

CASTE, referred to, 152

Note.—The sub-divisions of the four great castes among the Hindoos are endless, and the rules of each are observed so strictly that a man would often prefer death to the dishonour of 'breaking his caste.' In the text the food is given 'uncooked' to Hindoos, because no Hindoo would touch food not cooked by himself or a caste-fellow, unless he were superior in caste. To Mahomedans it is given 'cooked,' because they are generally indifferent, Mahomedanism constituting one great brotherhood, theoretically superior to such distinctions.

'CASTLE-BUILDING,' and consequent disaster, 23

CASTLE, enchanted, story of a, 360

CATS, stories of, 319, 331, 350

Note.—The cat among Mahomedans is cherished since the day when a snake got into Mahomed's sleeve, and the Prophet said, 'Get out!' and he refused. For then the Prophet said, 'Let us refer the matter to the cat,' and the snake consented. And the cat said to the snake, 'Put out your head, and let us talk the matter over.' And when the snake put out his head, the cat pounced on him, and carried him off. Therefore, say the people, a cat should never be struck except with a cotton-ball!

CHANGE of beard from black to gray as a warning to change the conduct, 7

CHARITY, giving bread in, to avert threatened disaster, to procure fortune, or to acquire merit, 23, 160, 237

CHARMS, for love, revenge, etc., 137, 138, 282

Note.—Belief in the power of charms is universal. Space forbids the mention of more than one or two. To induce love a charm is procured from a priest, a fakir, a blacksmith, or a carpenter, who writes certain cabalistic words on a piece of paper, which must be put in the lady's chamber, or under her bed. Again, if a man suspects his wife's fidelity, and would put it to the test, he writes on paper his father-in-law's and his mother-in-law's names. This charm he lays among the spent ashes of the bread-fire, and as the paper smoulders away day by day, the wife, if guilty, sickens and dies. The lucky day for putting a charm is the first Sunday of the new moon. For charms affecting the weather see Rain.

CHARPOY, a bed, see Bedstead.

CHATTY, an earthen jar, or pot, 1

Note.—It is of all sizes and used for all sorts of domestic purposes.

CHESS, rather *chaupat*, referred to, 317

Note.—A game of high antiquity in India. The chequered board is in the form of a cross, the men are all pawns, and dice are thrown as in backgammon. See illustration.

CHILDREN, left deserted in a wood or elsewhere, stories of, 333, 334, 353

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CLOTH, of supernatural manufacture, 356

CLOTHES, theft of a fairy's, in order to secure her person, 344

CLOVES, as a condiment, referred to, 116

COCK, story of a, 131

Note.—Fowls abound in every village, but the breed is small. 'The cackling here, the eggs there,' a proverb, as when one speaks excusingly, or with double meaning.

COMMON lands, referred to, 148

Note.—Common lands still exist in North India, to which every member of the community has a right, free of rent or tax. Here the cattle of the poor graze in charge of the village herdsman or their own friends. As a rule, however, the common land is poor. If any of it happens to be good, it may be cultivated by someone with common consent, and by the service of part of the produce going to the village generally, or to anyone who can show any customary right in it.

CONCEIT, ridicule of, 91

CORNBIN, a receptacle in every house for grain, 76

CORPSES, defilement to touch, 225

COTTON, bales of, referred to, 172

Note.—Every village community grows its own cotton, which the village-weavers weave into cloth.

COUNTING of persons or objects, mistakes in, 305

Note.—In this connection it should be observed that on the left bank of the river Kābul in the Peshawar Valley there stand a cluster of about sixteen pre-historic megaliths. The local superstition is that no two persons can agree as to their precise number; they refuse to be counted correctly. A similar superstition prevails in Wiltshire about Stonehenge.

COW-DUNG, ordinary fuel in India, 103

Note.—It is made into thick cakes and dried on the gable-ends of the houses. In many parts of India, where wood no longer exists and every yard of ground is under cultivation, no other fuel is available.

COWRIES, a medium of exchange in India,

27

CROWS, tales of, 15, 311

Note.—'Brothers stand by brothers, 'tis ravens favour crows.' Proverb deprecating family disunion. (Ravens and crows are often found in company.)

CURIOSITY, a prevailing infirmity, 214,

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CURRY, as food (seldom in the Panjāb eaten by the poor), 116

D.

DĀL, a vetch, referred to, 235

Note.—The grain of Dāl, made into a porridge with a little clarified butter, makes an excellent dish. The once famous 'Arabica Revallenta' is said to have been merely the flour of dāl.

DANCING-GIRLS, referred to, 59, 177

Note.—These girls have to undergo a very severe training from early childhood in singing and dancing. They are often very accomplished, many of them being able to read and write and to compose verses, while those famous for their beauty are said to be very wealthy. Of shame, however, they are destitute.

DARK sayings, examples of, 86, 87, 201

DECEIT, allowable in love—'all's fair,' etc., 161

DECOY, for partridges, sketch of, 175

Note.—This decoy, which I sketched on the spot, was used much more formerly than at present. It is made of deer-skin, and figured as in drawing. It enlists the curiosity of the game, which draw near to inspect it.

DEER, attracted by beauty and innocence, 336

DEER, varieties of, common in India, referred to, 98

DEHSAR, the ten-headed god, 25

DEMONS, belief in, and stories of, 55, 76, 150, 200, 256, 298

Note.—In India the belief is general. Demons generally live in cemeteries or burning-ghats. Sometimes they frequent houses, and then no influence will induce people to occupy them. Iron is believed to be efficacious against them. When a woman is in labour, or a child is sleeping, a piece of iron laid near will keep off demons. Fits are believed to be caused by an evil spirit in the form of a rat getting into the head. Many demons are believed to have bodies with horns, and to live, like vampires, on human flesh.

DIALECT, changes in, and varieties of, referred to, 265

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DOGS, fidelity of the, 131

DOGS, used in coursing, 297

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Note.—The 'village' dogs live in the village anywhere. They are excellent scavengers and watch-dogs. Half-starved, however, they have a wretched existence.

DOLES, a praiseworthy practice to give, 161

DOOLIE, a covered litter, used for carrying women or children, or the sick, 75, 163, 193

DOOR-TAX, reference to the, 45

Note.—Each householder pays the *khān* of the village a door-tax (who also receives dues on betrothals, weddings, etc.).

DRAWING water, the duty of the women and girls, 313

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DRINKING water, peculiar fashion of, 58

DRUMS, beating of, 263

Note.—Drums, or tom-toms, are always beaten at weddings, all night long, and at funerals, and also form part of the accompaniment to the dancing of dancing-girls. The fingers alone are used to beat them with.

DRUNKENNESS, rare, but not unknown, 59

Note.—The native spirit—*arrack*—made from barley or rice, is very coarse and strong.

DUMB signs and tokens, a means of communicating in matters of intrigue and love, 164, 167, 252

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Note.—As Sir Topas in 'Twelfth Night,' so the *kadi*, or priest, in India is always summoned to drive out the evil spirit. See Possession.

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EYE, taking out of, as a punishment, 106

Note.—I have abundance of lore, but no stories, of the '*evil eye*.' The natives, indeed, are shy on the subject, as they are in dread of the malign influence, and never know when they may be afflicted by it.

F.

FAIRIES, reference to, and stories of, 39,

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Note.—The villagers of the Upper Punjab thoroughly believe in fairies, which are of two kinds—those living in the fabulous mountains encircling the earth, who are fair and of surpassing beauty, and a little folk living among lonely hills, and able to appear and disappear. The latter are said to be one foot in stature and to use little blankets as clothing. Villagers have told me some singular anecdotes respecting their appearances, which lack of space forbids me to insert here.

FAITH in God exemplified, 138

FAKERS (fakirs), religious mendicants, 70, 174, 179, 216, 233, 248, 254, 282

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Note.—Fakirs among Mahomedans, and jogis among Hindoos, are men who have renounced the world for religion. They wander about living on alms, and often assume the duties of spiritual directors. They are believed to be endowed with miraculous powers, to be potent in driving out evil spirits, and to be impervious to bullet or sword-thrust. When people part they say, 'May God and the fakir forgive you your sins!'

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Note.—Mahomedans dig very shallow graves. They are so constructed, however, that the body lies in a chamber with the face turned towards Mecca. Hence the 'dark narrow house' of the tale (127). Good men sometimes make their graves, in their lifetime, of masonry, filling them up with wheat each year, and distributing it to the poor the next.
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Note.—The hūzra is not merely a public rest-house where every wayfarer finds shelter, but also the usual meeting-place for the young men. It consists of one or two rooms.

Travellers are admitted free of charge, the villagers in turn entertaining them with food, and providing them with a mattress and a quilt. So also each villager in turn collects wood for travellers' fires and grass for their horses or mules. The *hūjra* is generally built close to the mosque, where there is always a supply of water.

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Note.—The lumbardār, or principal malik, of a village is generally the resident khān, or hereditary lord, but he is not necessarily the richest man or the one possessed of most land. His business is to collect the revenue, to settle disputes, and to show an example of order. He is assisted by the jirga, or village council, consisting of the principal landowners, to whom little disputes about land, betrothals, weddings, etc., are referred. The British Government, however, exercises so close a supervision that the people, as a rule, have really no need to settle anything. In a village there may be several maliks, though only one lumbardār, while a khān may

- be the hereditary lord of several villages. Religious disputes are settled by the *kāzi*, or priest (which see). Any small fine (named *nājāh*) imposed by the *kān* or *lumbardār* is divided between himself and the *maliks* who compose the *jirga*, which *jirga* is, or was, in fact, very like the Customary Manor-courts of old England.
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- MADĀR-PLANT, 202
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Note.—In the Panjāb there is a species of red-legged partridge called the *chikōr*, a handsome bird, but timid and easily tamed, which is common also in Asia Minor and Cyprus. It is said to be in love with the moon, which it will continue to gaze at for hours together.

- Hence, a verse-proverb which may be rendered thus:
 'Such the *chakr*'s fidelity.
 The moon cares not, in pride descending.
 No scorner, scorn! but, as for me,
 My love, like his, shall know no ending.
 On seeing a new moon people look at the right hand and wish. Or they look at some gold, or silver, or glass, and breathe a prayer for good fortune. Or, looking at the moon, with their hands uplifted in the attitude of prayer, they say, 'O Moon, may you be lucky!' Or again, they pray for peace and rest to the angels that bear the moon. When the moon is eclipsed, women in certain conditions must sleep on their backs, because, if they lie on their sides, their children's ears would be found attached to their shoulders.
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Note.—The charm described in the text is well known in our villages of the north-west border. Charms for averting rain, however, are by no means so common as those used for procuring rain in times of drought. Want of space forbids me to mention more than one, but that one is the most interesting of all. In seasons of great and continued drought all the little maidens, 'the young and the innocent,' meet together and make up dolls out of rags. They then walk sadly, in the full heat of the day, to the top of some neighbouring eminence, bearing their dolls with them. There, having taken off their chuddahs and shoes, they stand round in a circle, and sing together a quaint old traditional song, the first verse of which may be translated thus:

'Mourning our mannikins, we call
To God above for cooling rain;
O fair white raindrops softly fall,
Come from the gleaming sky again!
Fall, for our heads above are turning,
Come, for our feet beneath are burning.
O fall, white rain,
O come, fair rain!'

If any sign of a cloud can be discerned in the brazen sky, they add a special refrain:

'Pour, pour, O rain!
Ah, thou black tiger [the cloud];
Ploughmen are hungry,
Bullocks are thirsty,
Send us the rain again!'

Having finished their invocations, the little girls, if Mahomedans, dig graves and bury their dolls, and, if Hindoos, they make a pile of them and burn them.

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twenty yards, they turn solemnly round and then rush together, the shock of their skulls resounding on all sides.

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